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Sundvik et al.

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(54) **METHOD OF MAKING A FILTER ASSEMBLY**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 754 days.

This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

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See application file for complete search history.

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Primary Examiner — Duane Smith

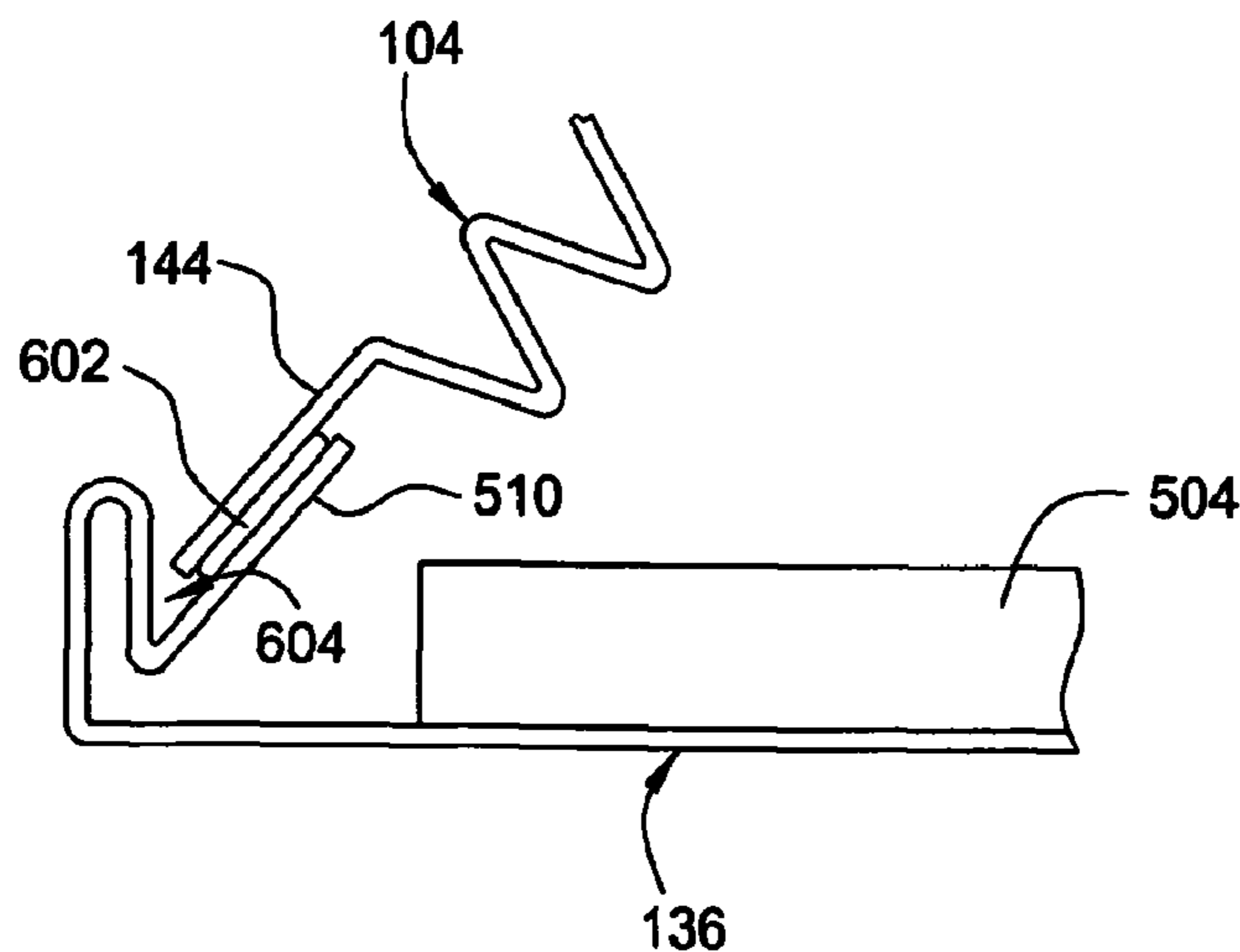
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Embodiments of the invention generally include a filter assembly having a media pack having a single web of pleated media having at least two mini-pleated regions arranged in non-linear orientation. In one embodiment, a filter assembly includes a media pack defined by a single web of media, and an adhesive layer coupling a flat end of the media pack to a frame assembly to form a lap joint. In another embodiment, a filter assembly includes a media pack sealed to a frame assembly. A discontinuous layer of adhesive couples at least one edge of the media pack to the frame assembly.

24 Claims, 12 Drawing Sheets



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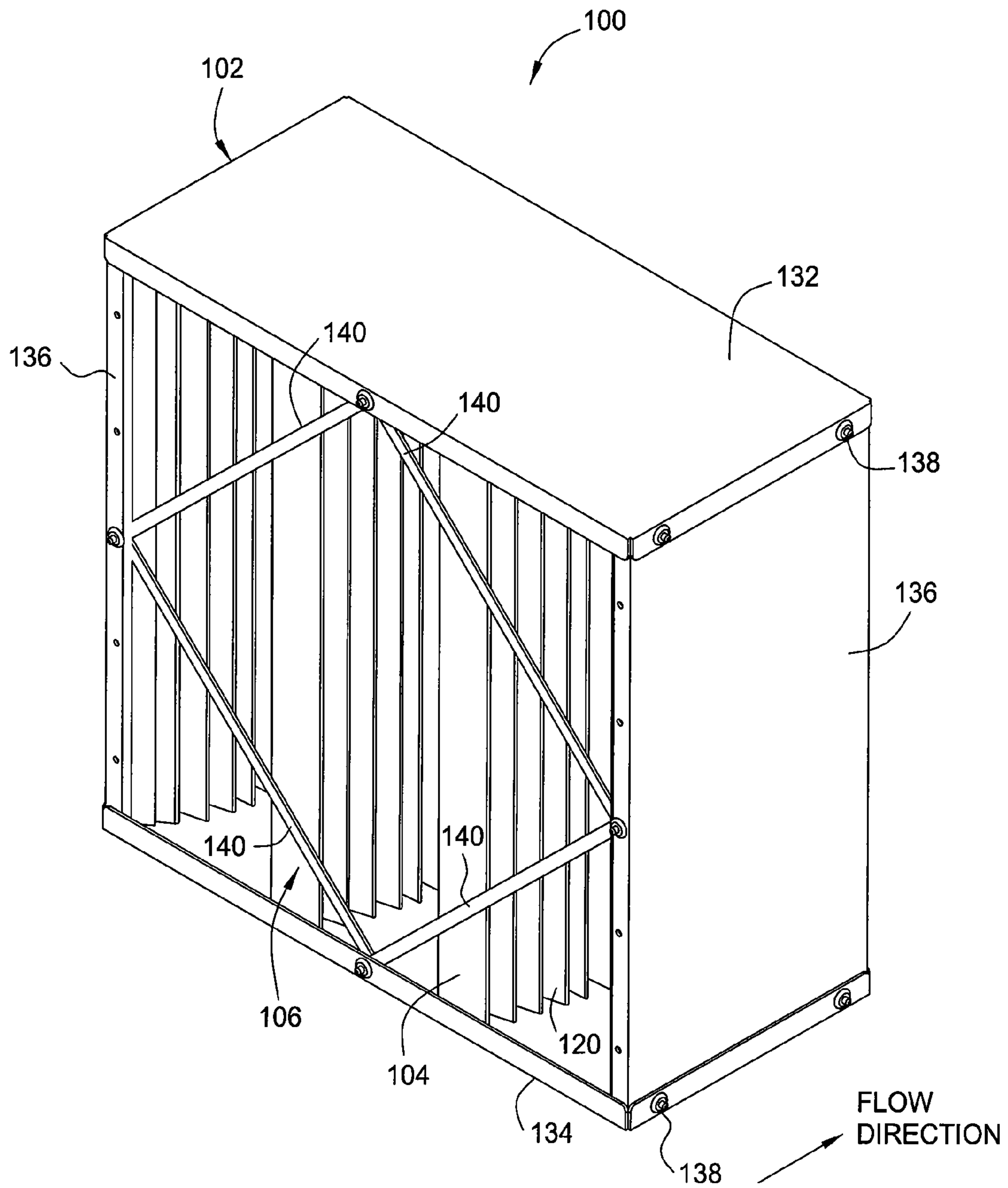


FIG. 1A

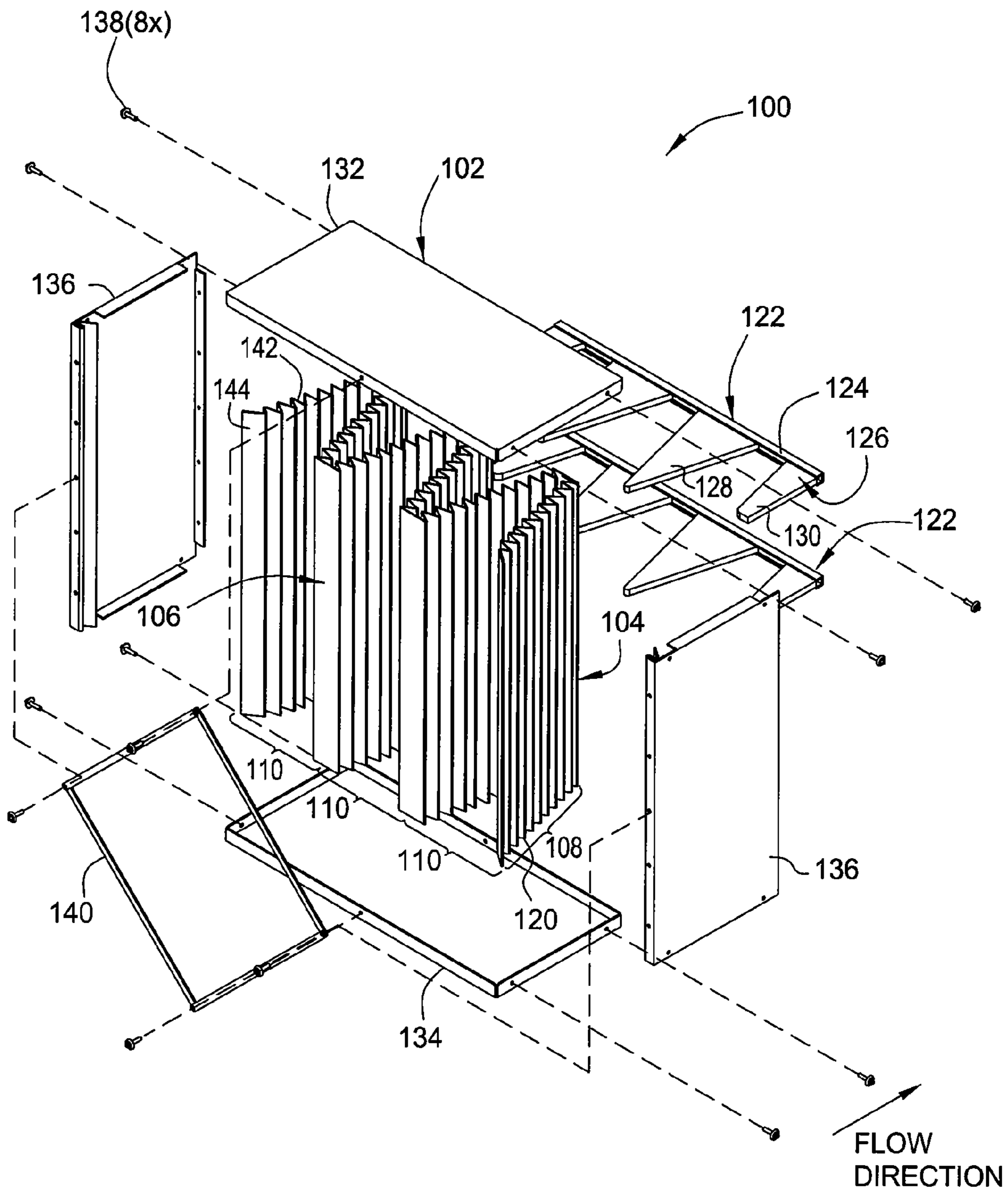


FIG. 1B

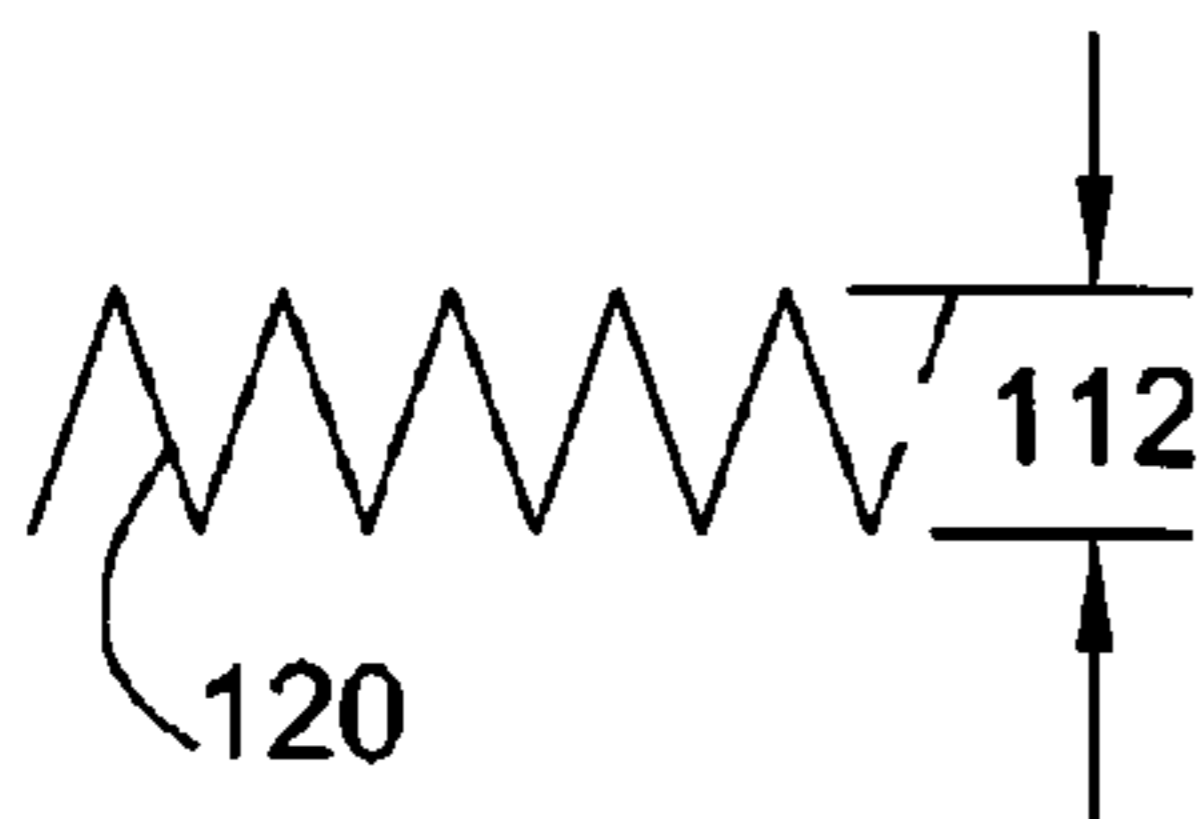


FIG. 1C

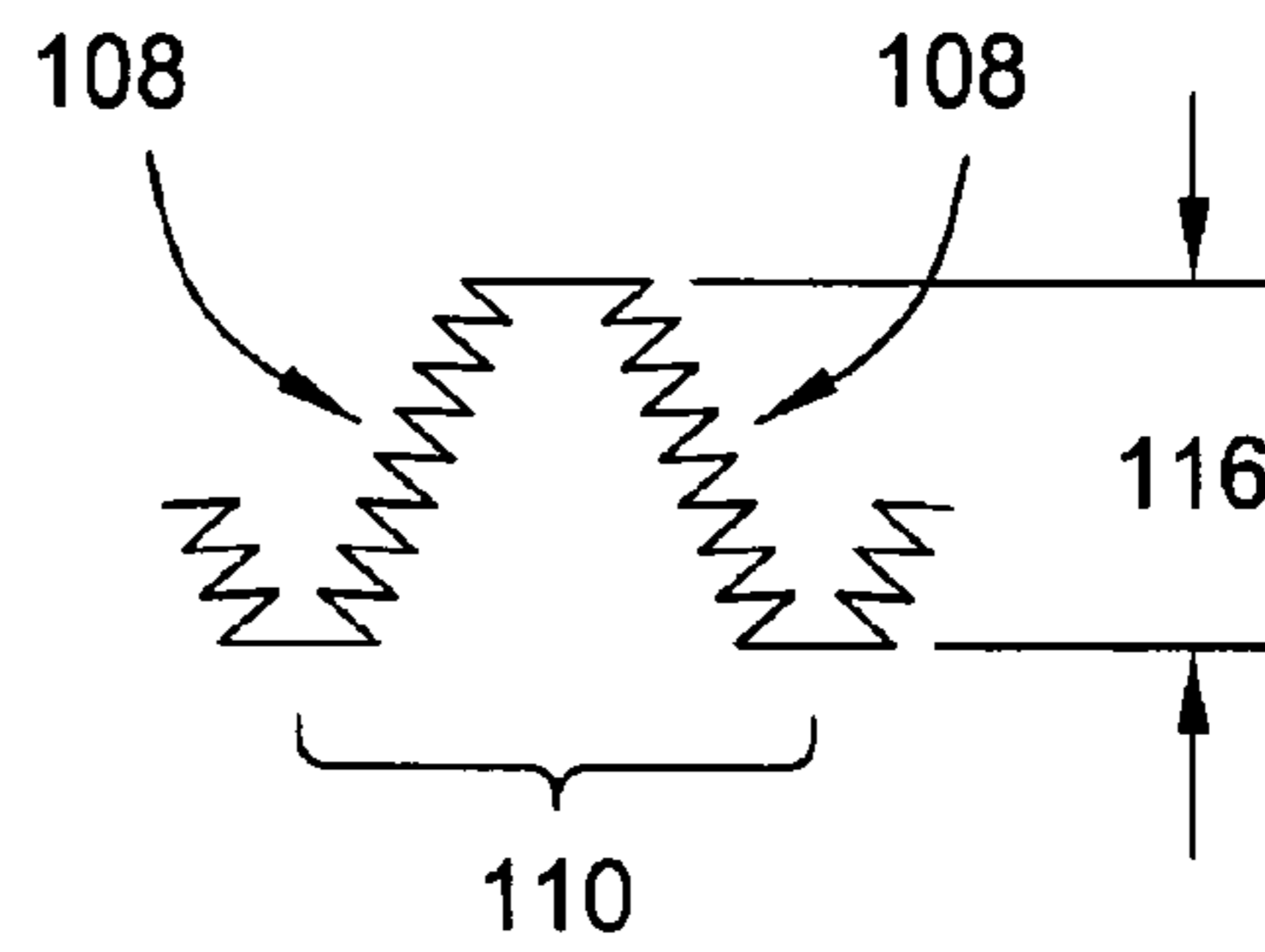


FIG. 1D

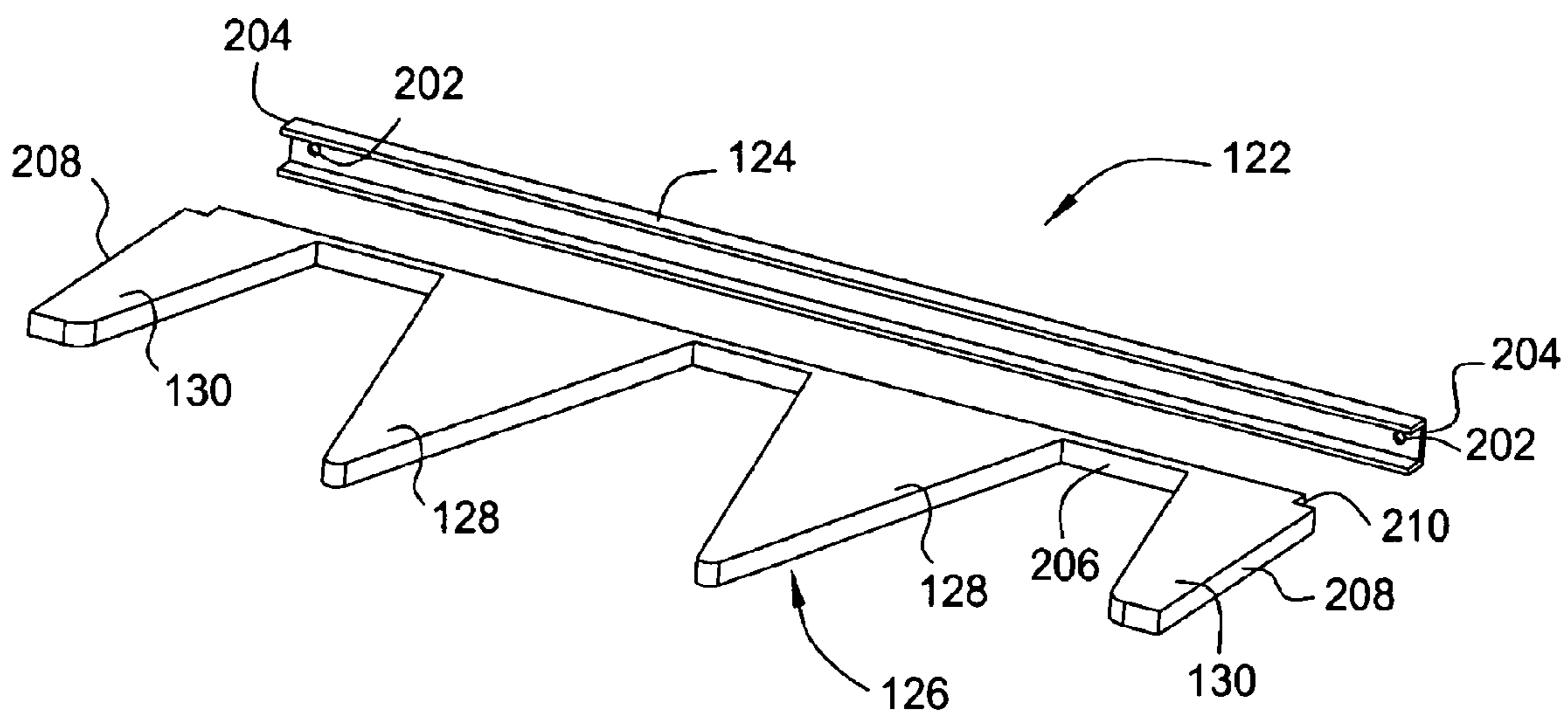


FIG. 2

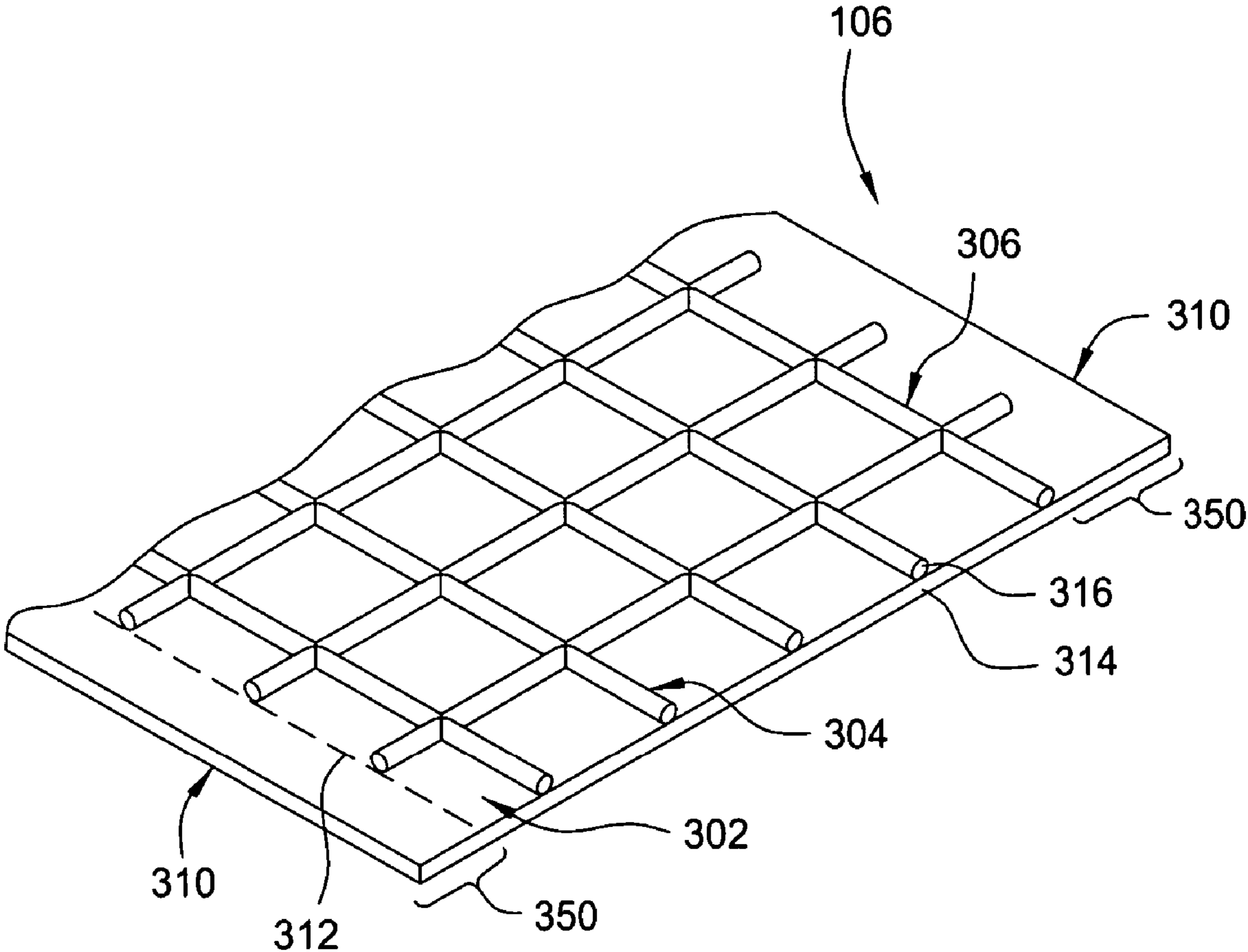


FIG. 3

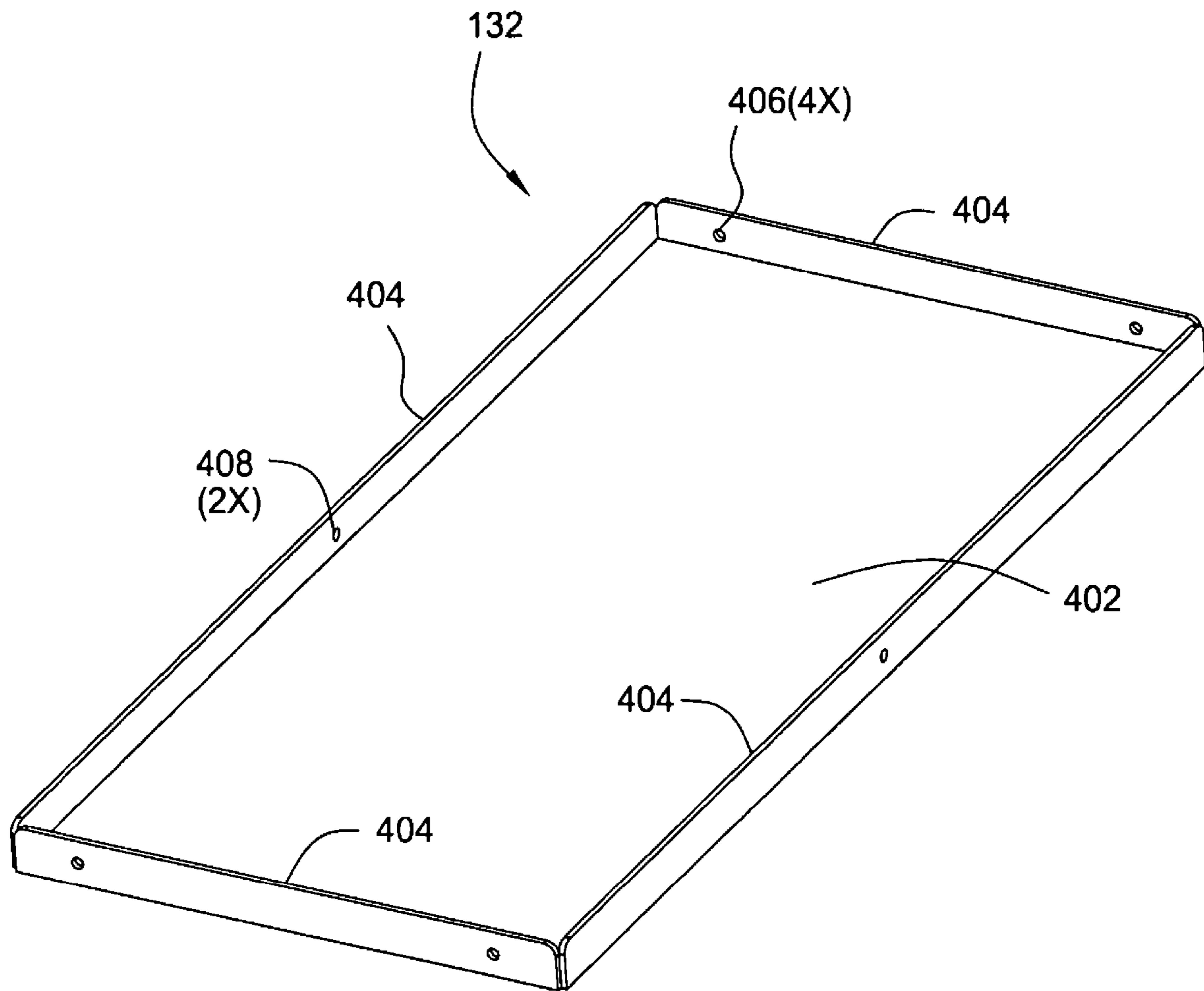


FIG. 4

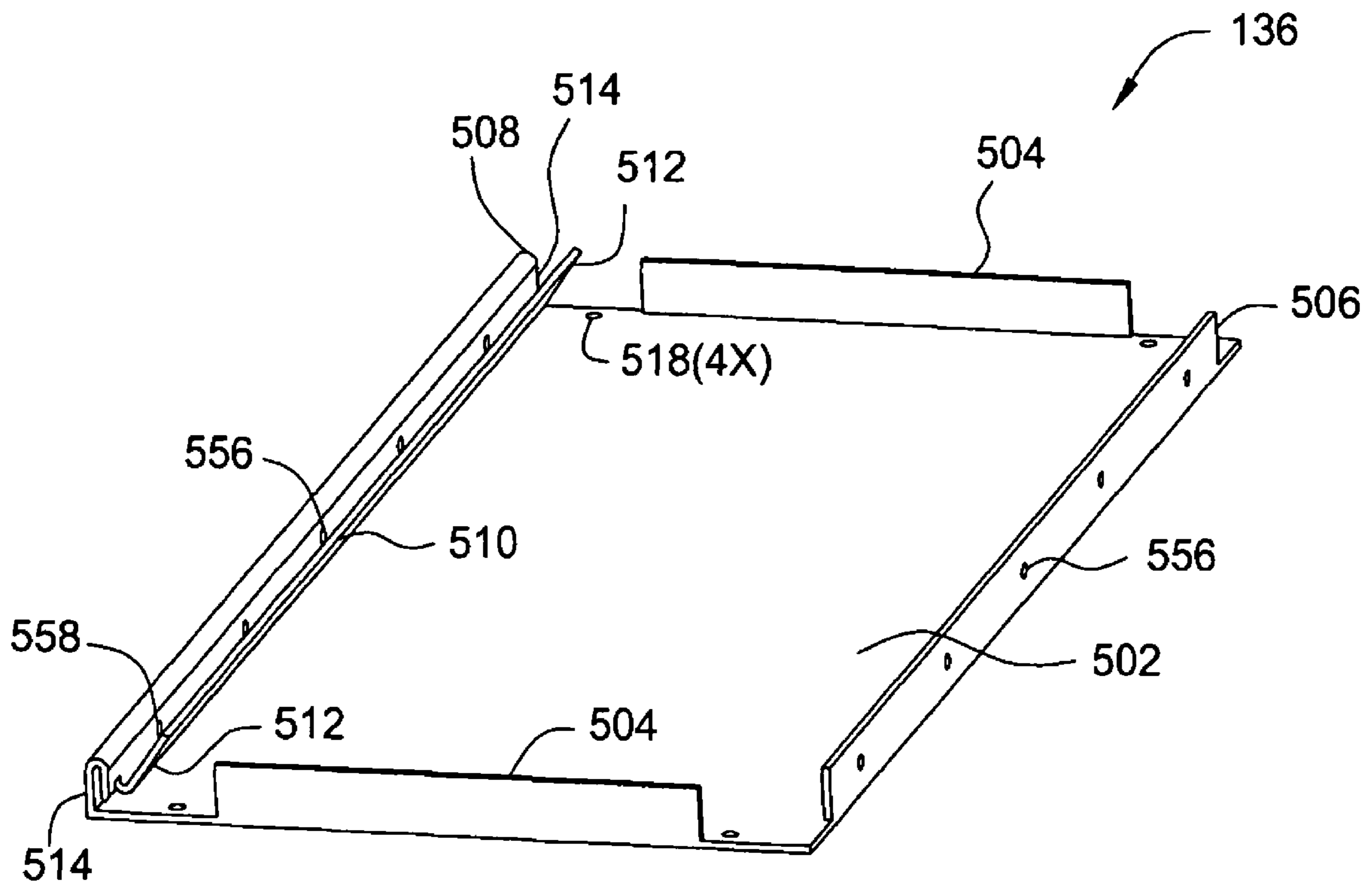


FIG. 5A

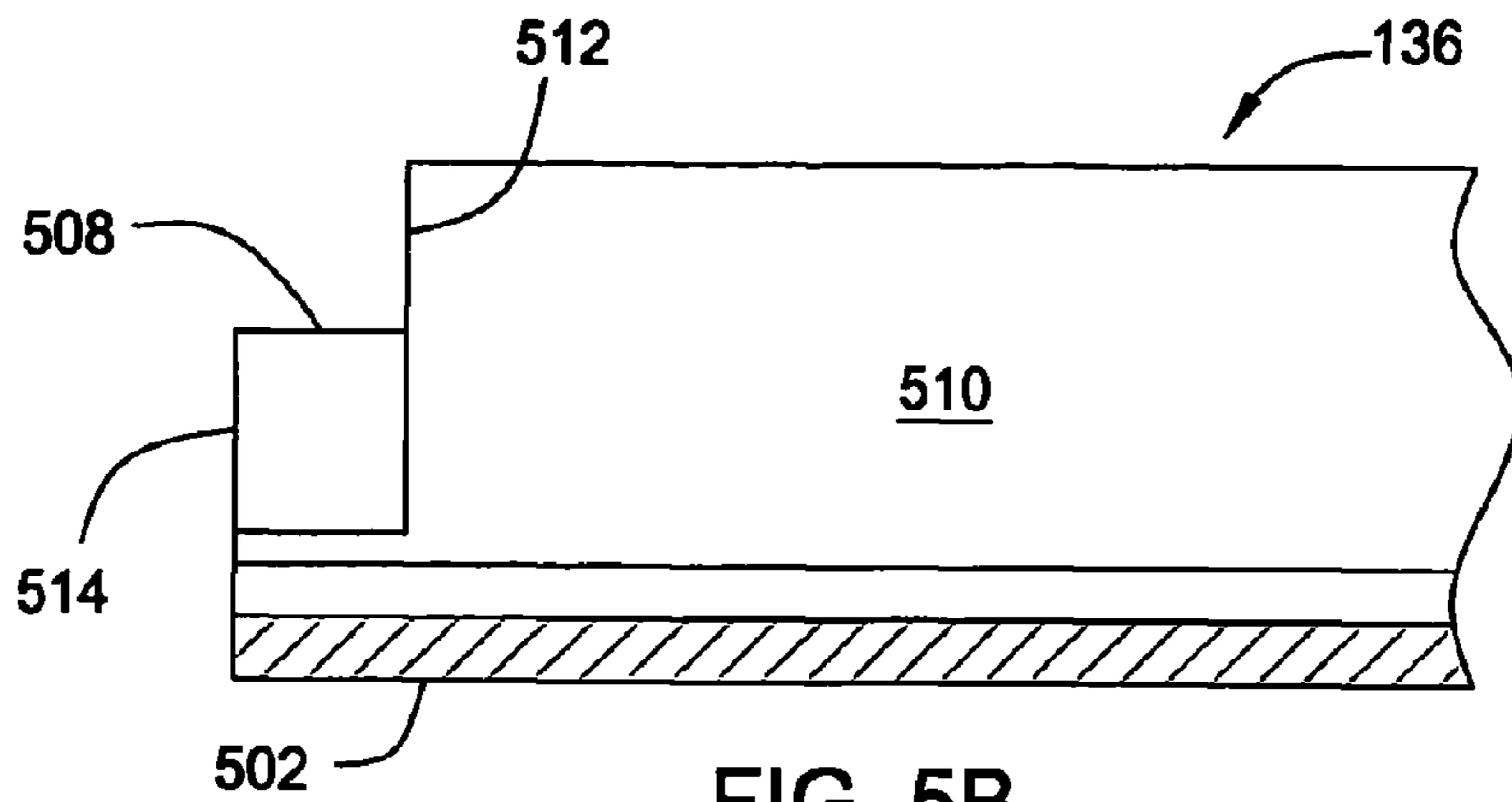


FIG. 5B

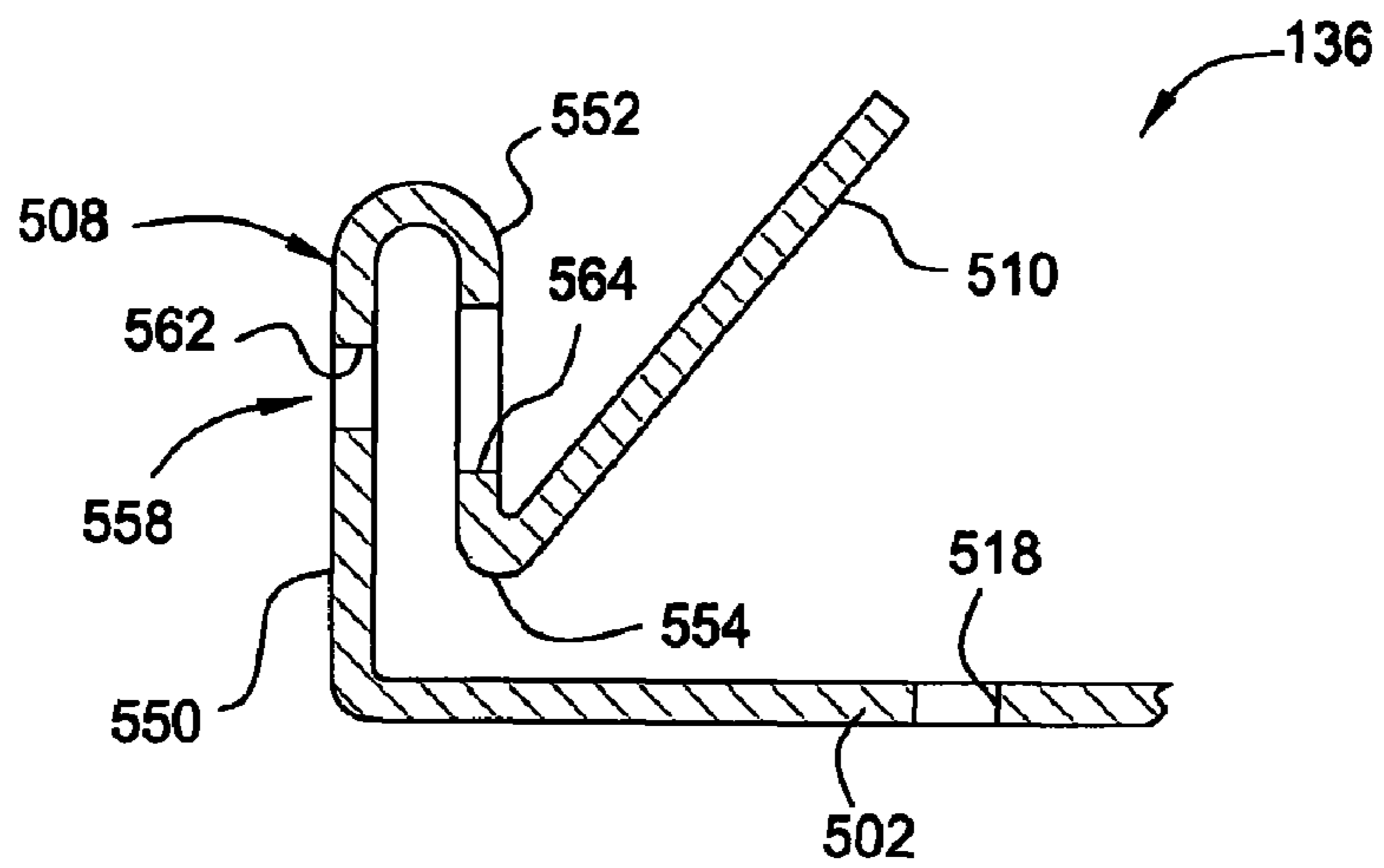


FIG. 5C

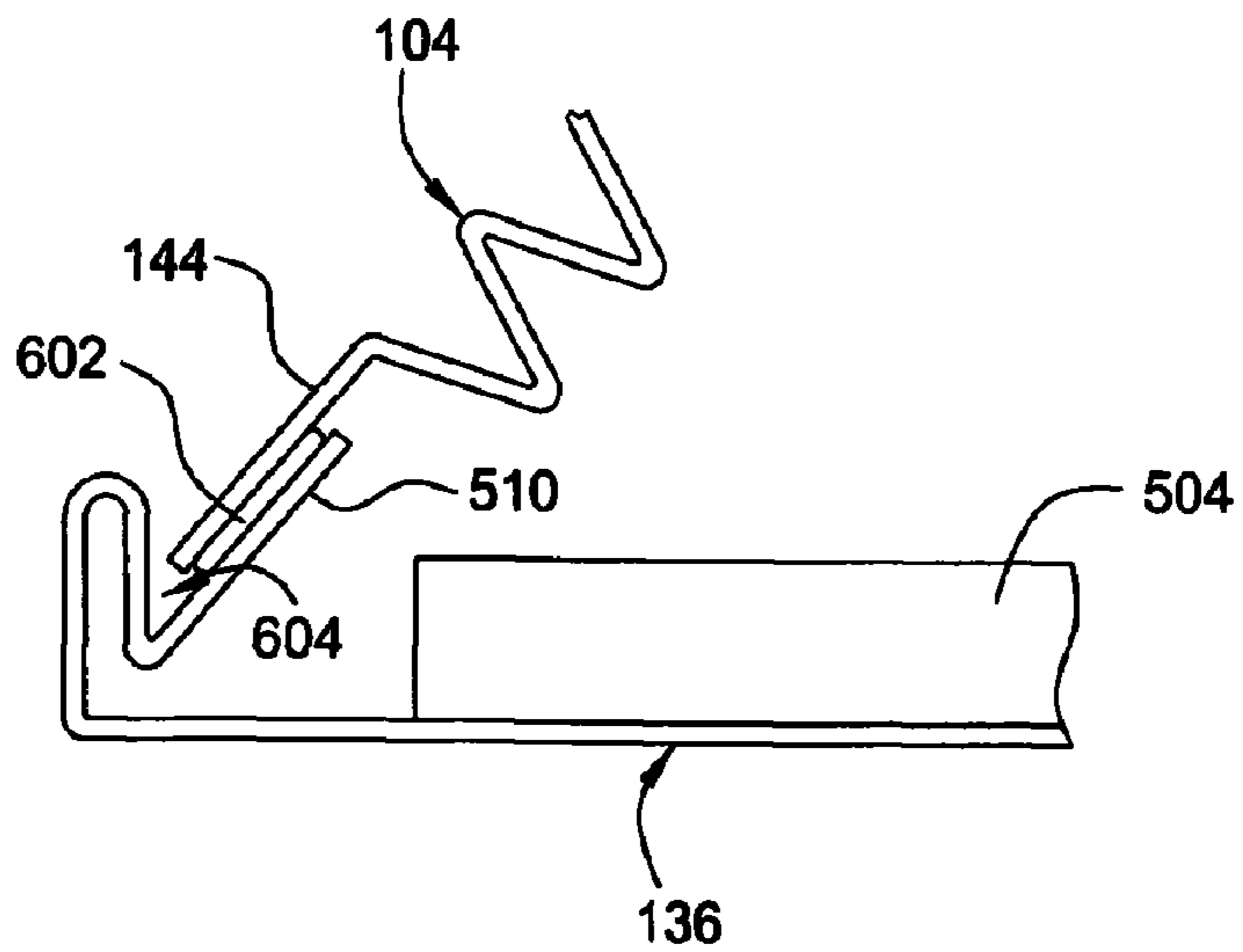


FIG. 6

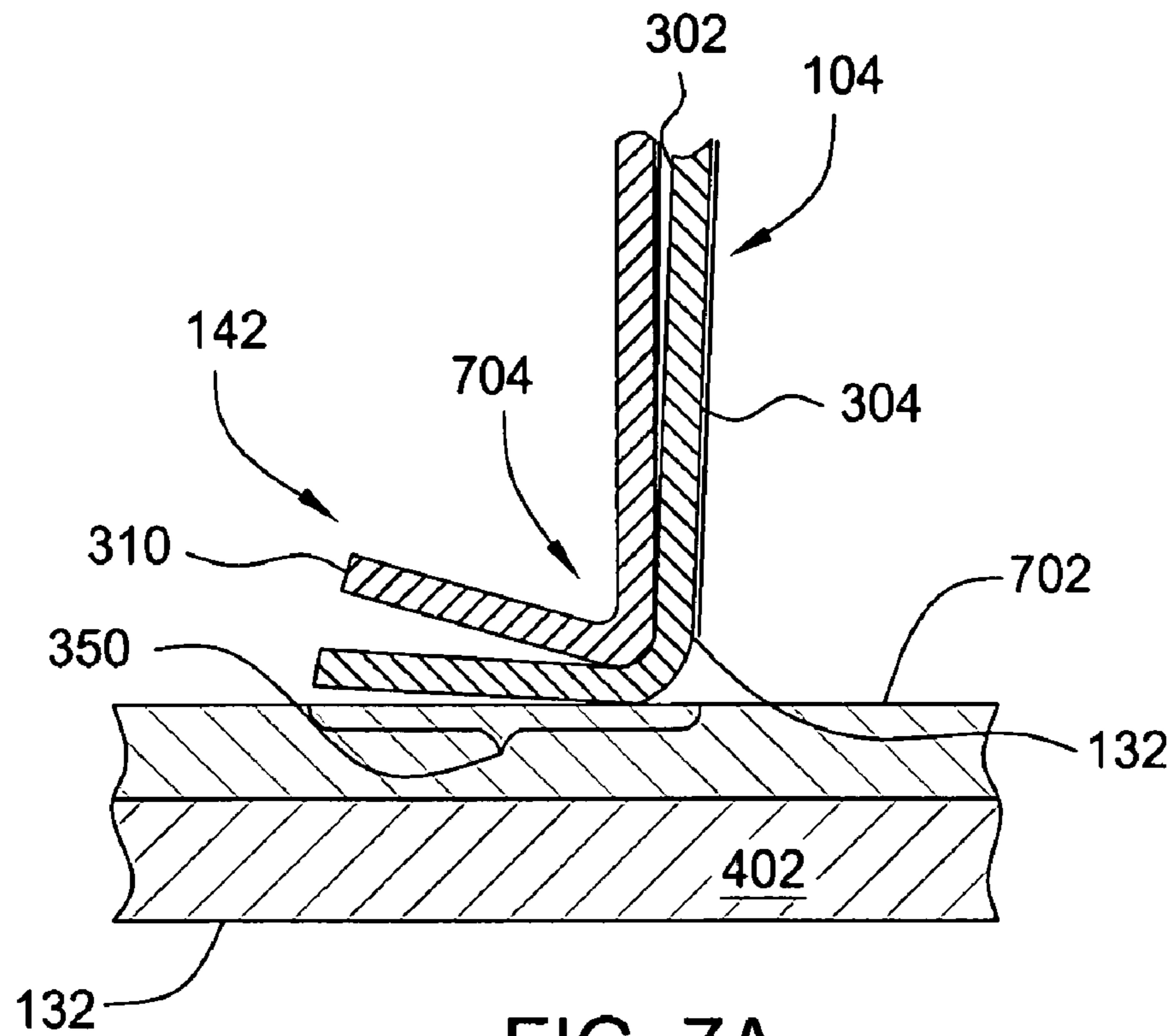


FIG. 7A

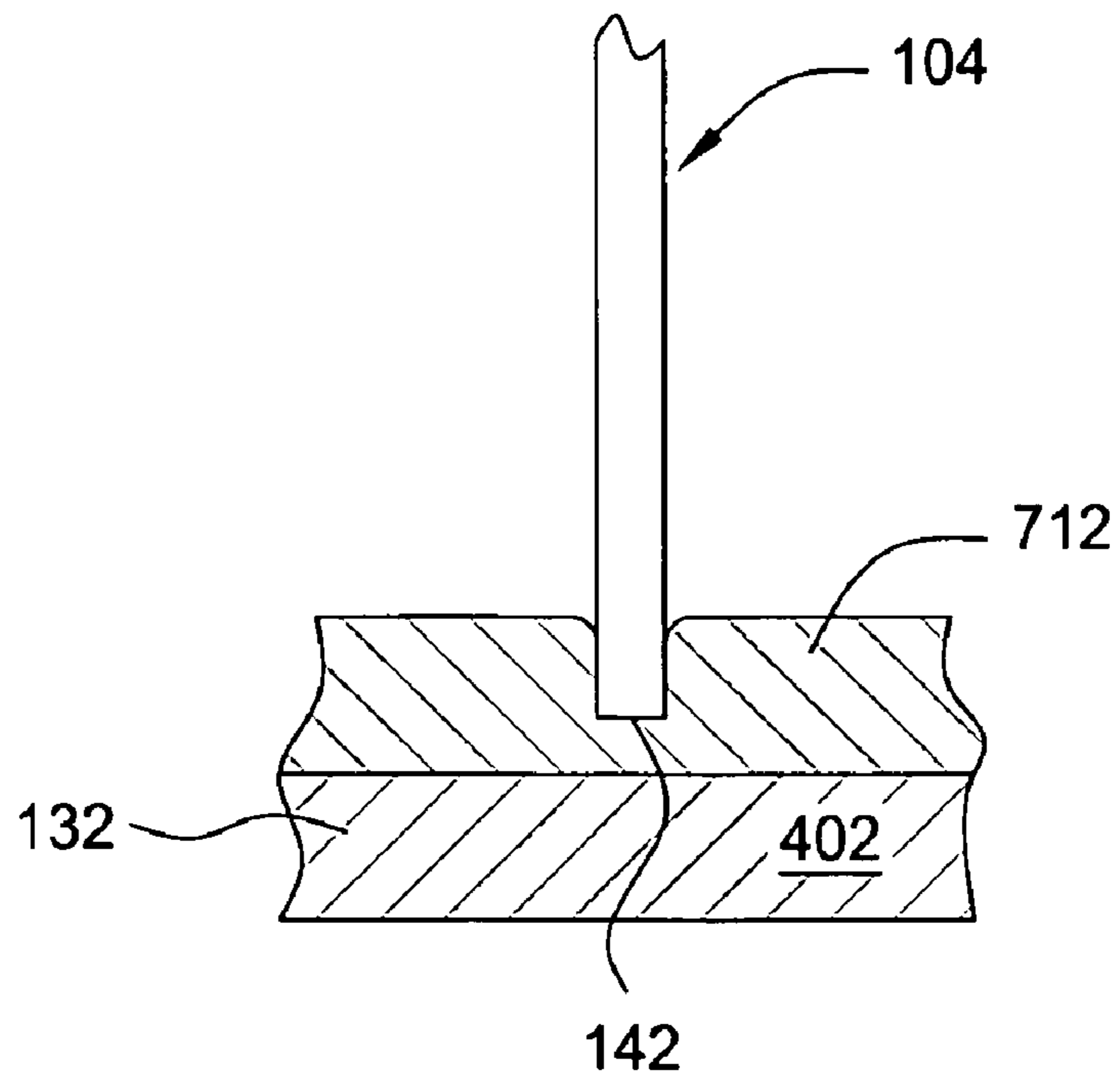


FIG. 7B

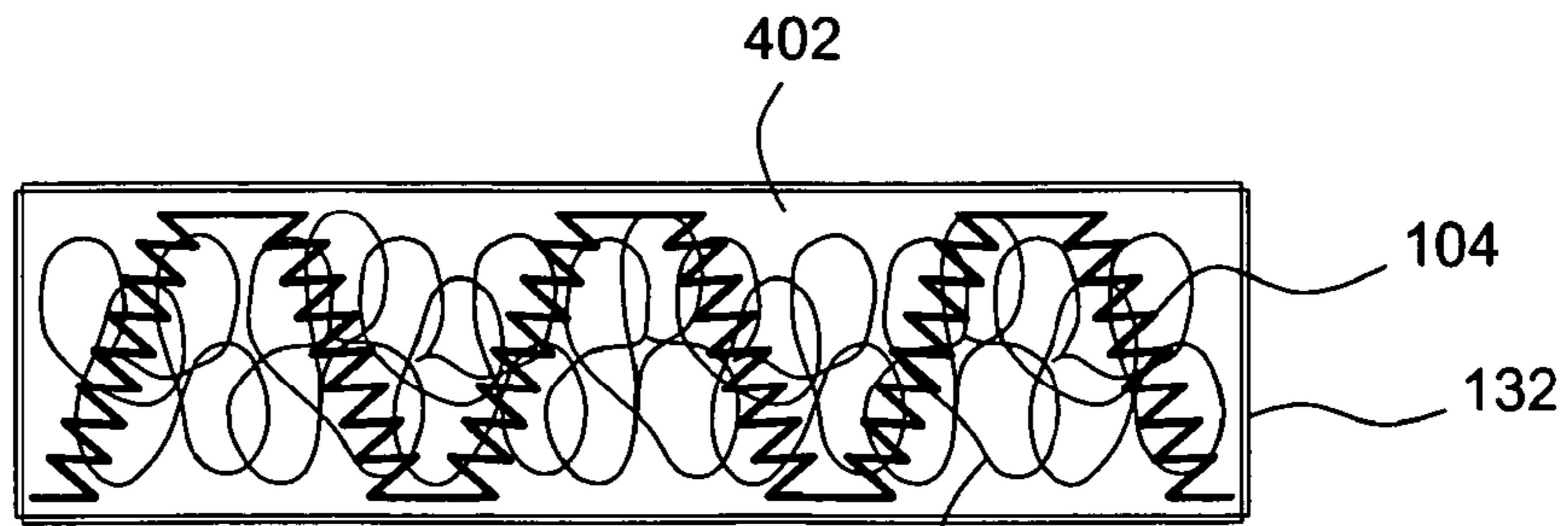


FIG. 8A

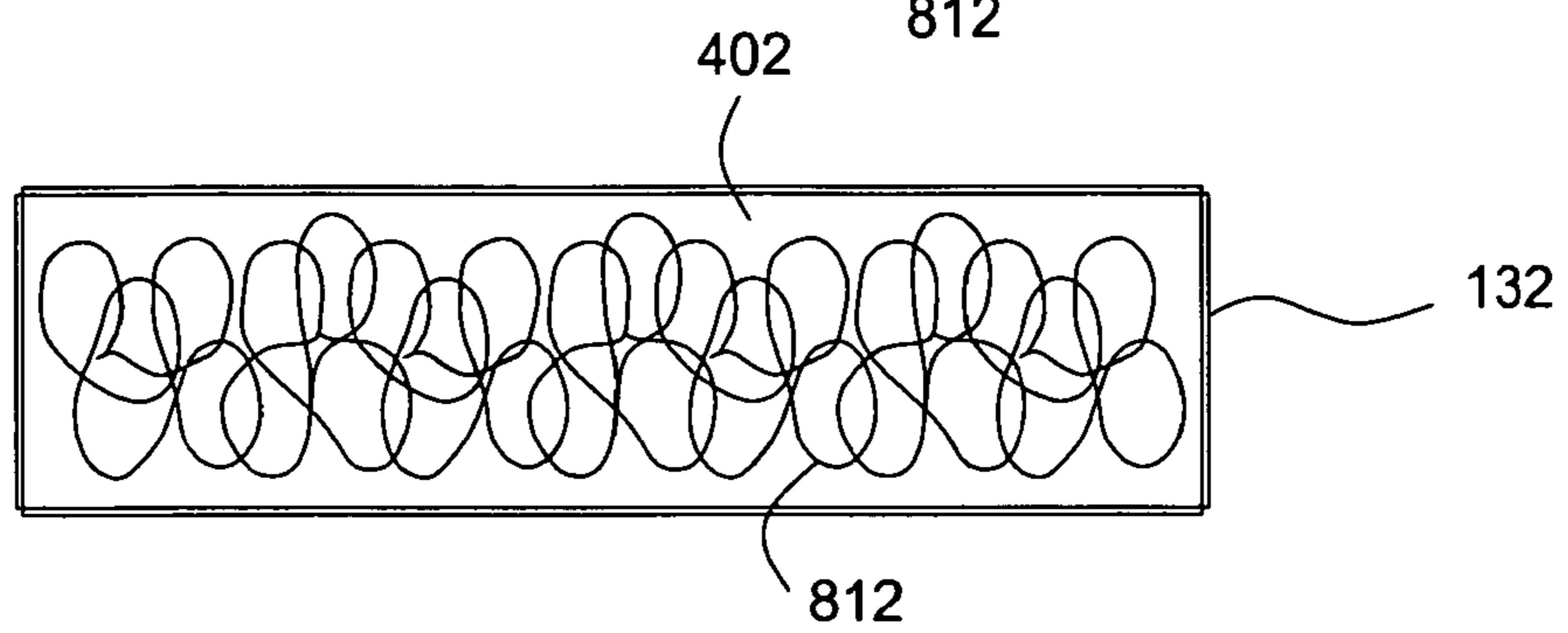


FIG. 8B

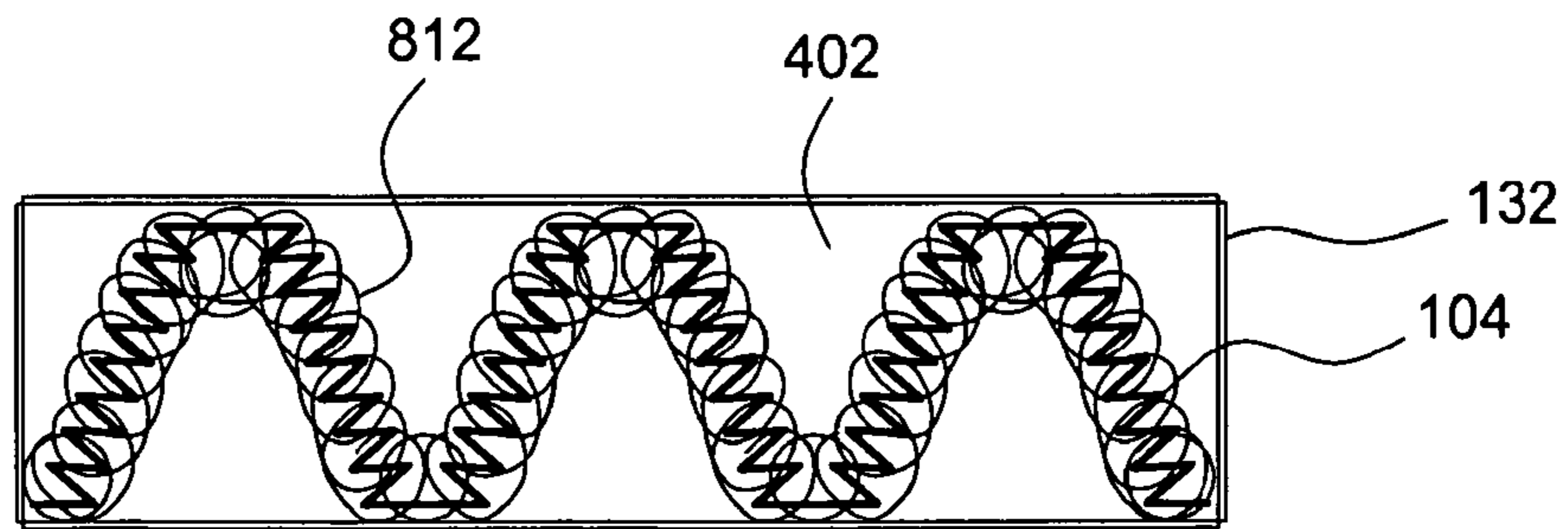


FIG. 9A

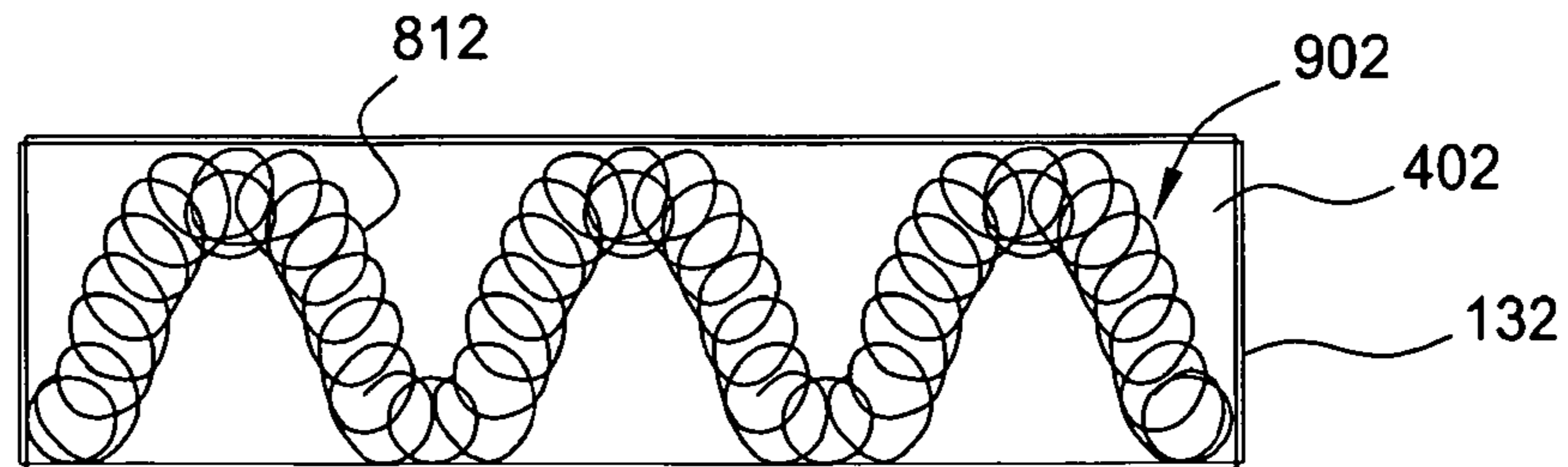


FIG. 9B

FIG. 10

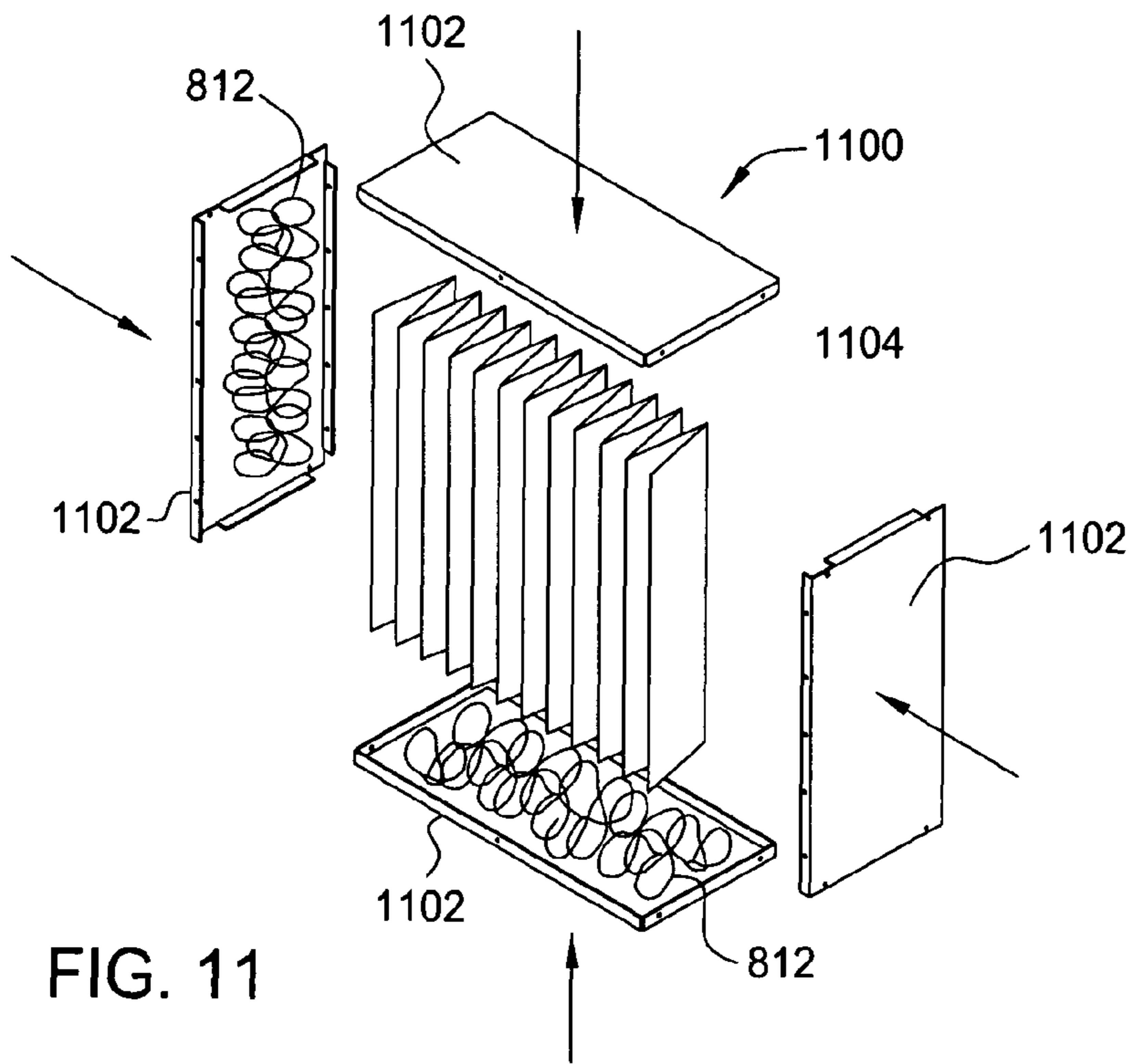
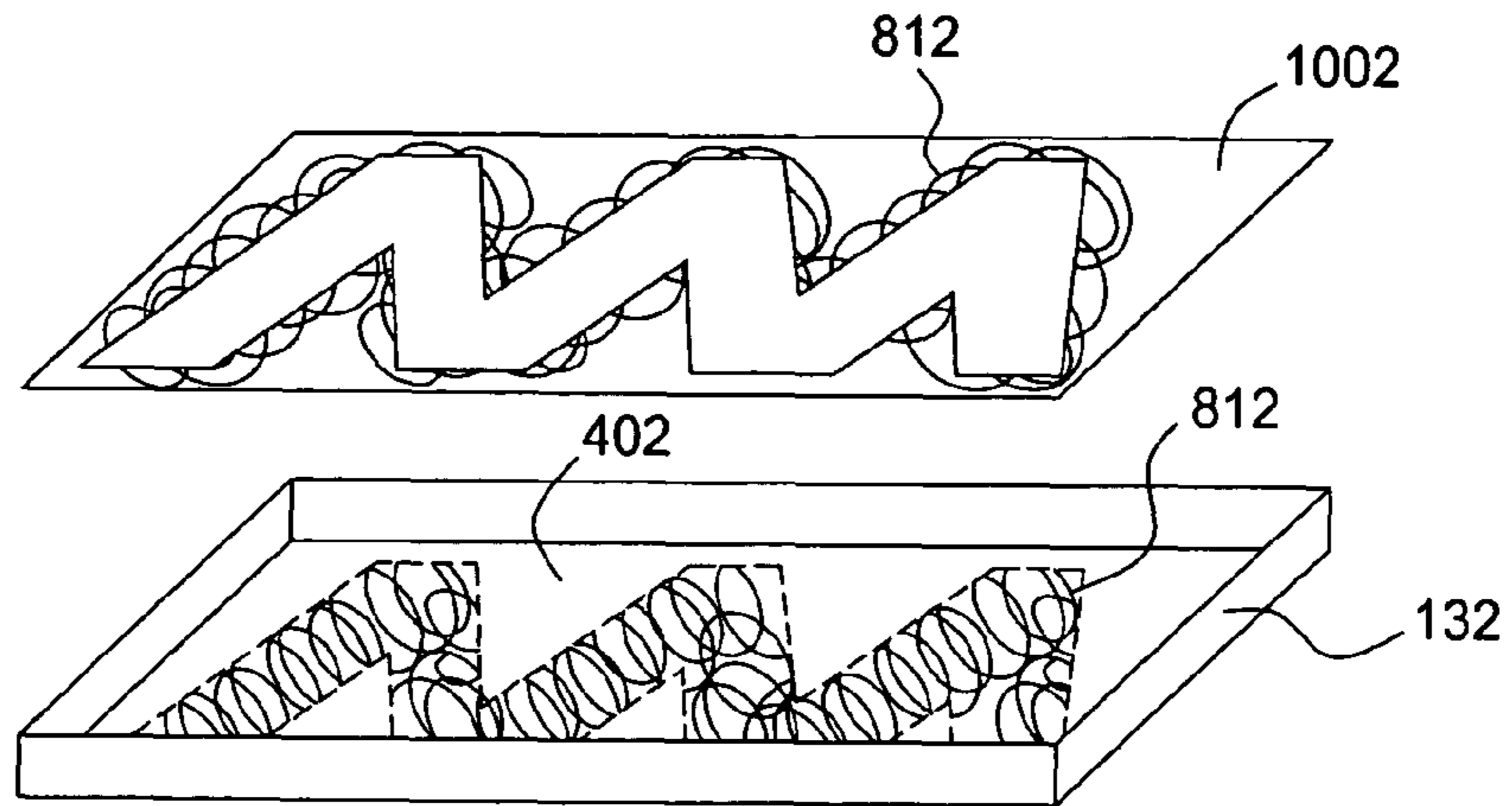
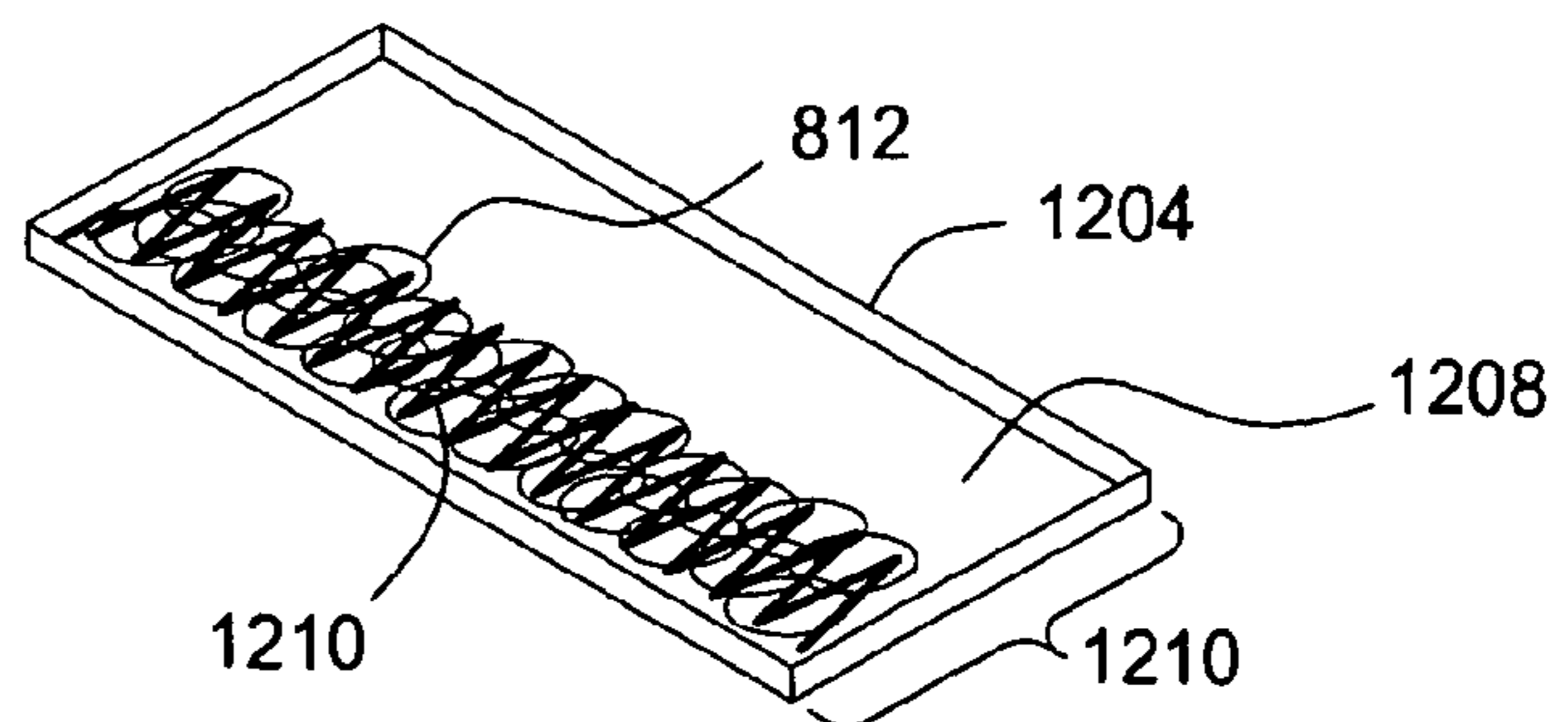


FIG. 11

FIG. 12



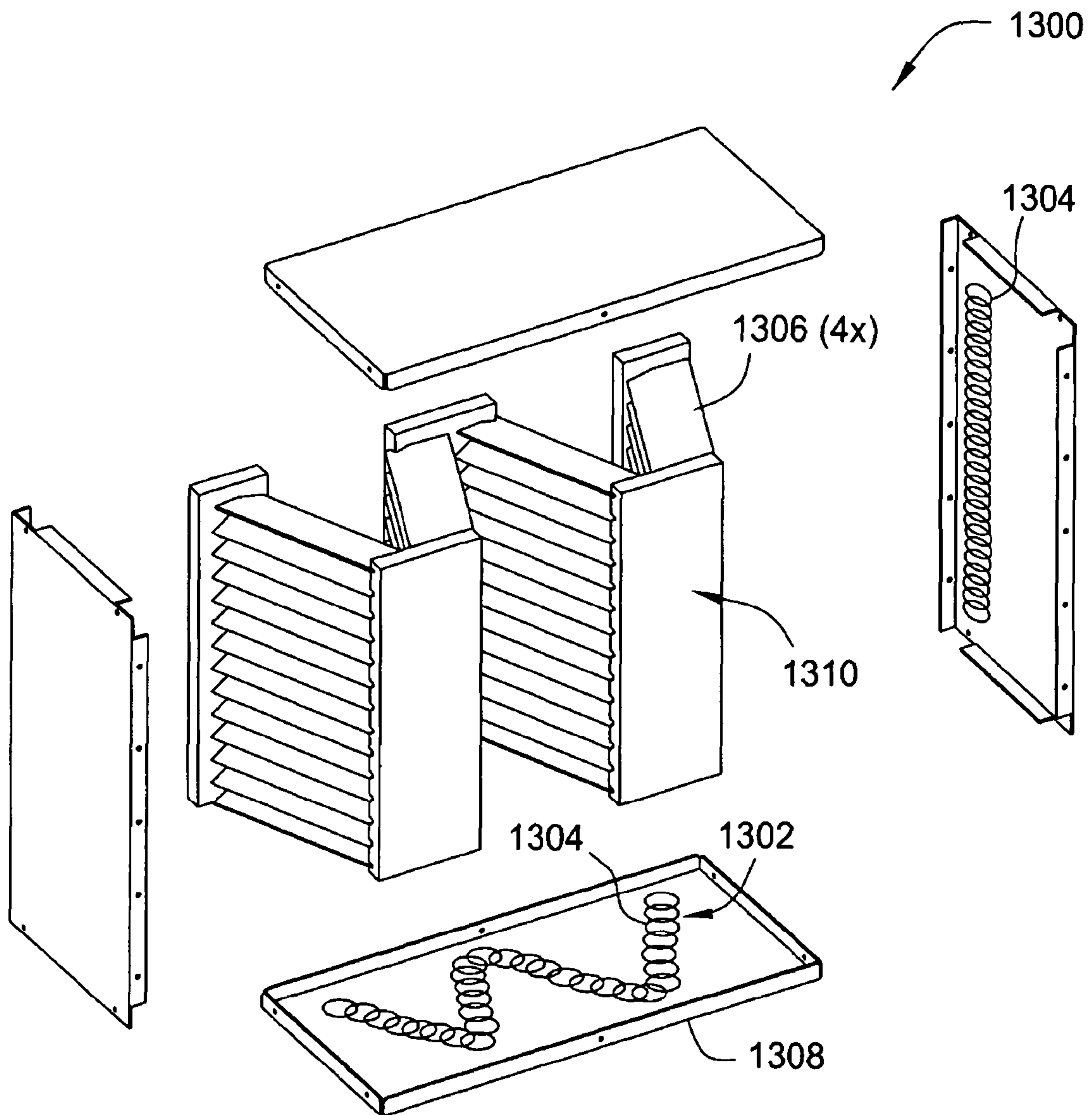


FIG. 13

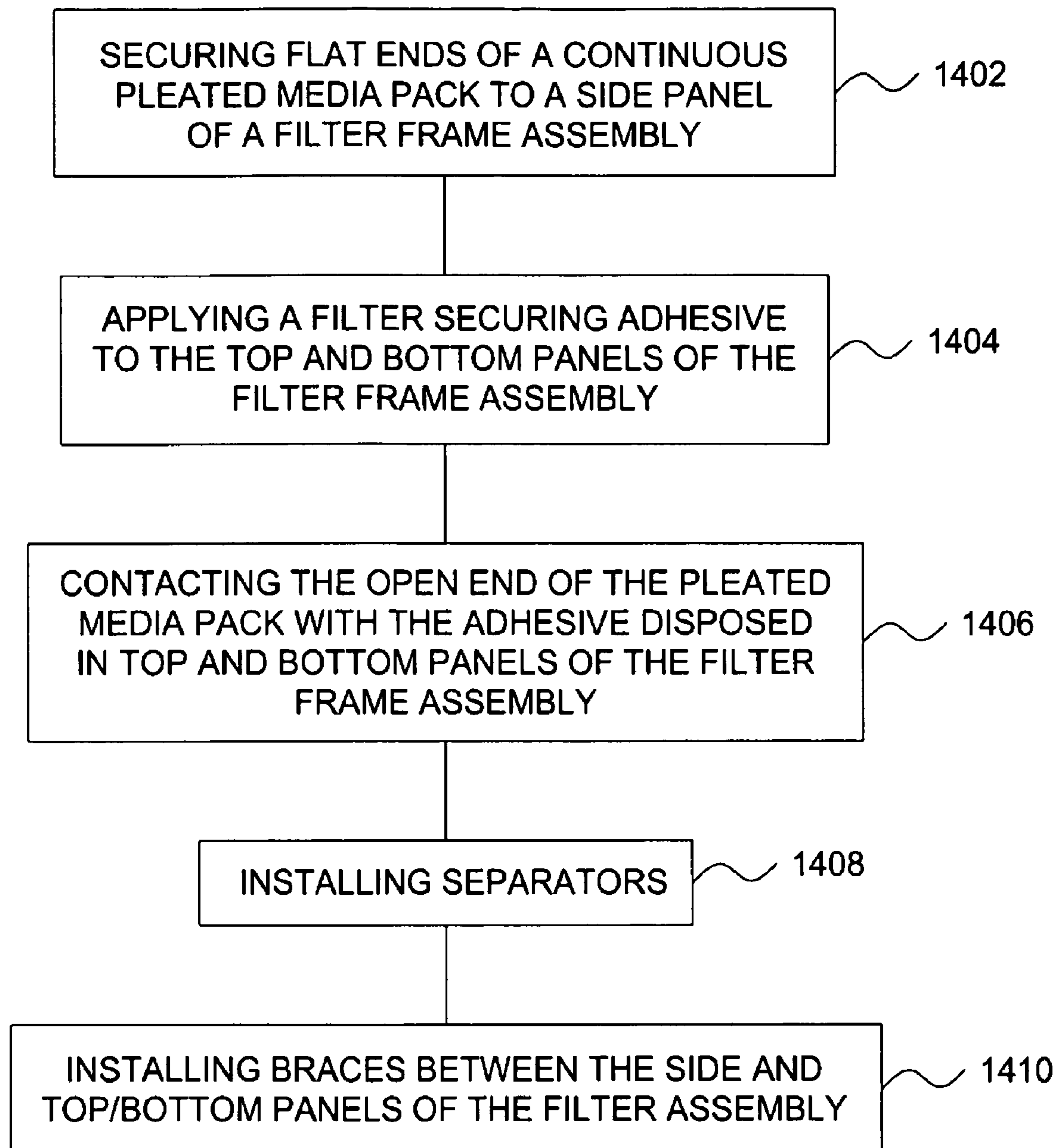


FIG. 14

METHOD OF MAKING A FILTER ASSEMBLY**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

This application is related to U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/365,571, filed Mar. 1, 2006, entitled "Box-V Filter and Method of Fabricating the Same" by Karlsson, et al. and U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/365,326, filed Mar. 1, 2006, entitled "Reduced Adhesive Filter Assembly" by Devine, et al., both of which are herein incorporated by reference in their entireties.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**1. Field of the Invention**

The embodiments of the present invention relate to an air filter for heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, and a method for manufacturing the same.

2. Background of the Invention

Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems typically include at least one particulate air filter for maintaining indoor air quality. Examples of facilities using these types of HVAC systems include office buildings, hospitals and factories, among others. Many systems include banks of medium to high efficiency, or final stage, filters, along with low efficiency pre-filters.

One filter commonly utilized in HVAC applications as a final stage filter is a RIGA-FLO® filter, available from Camfil Farr, Inc., located in Riverdale, N.J. This filter is available in a variety of configurations and meeting American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHREA) standards. Although RIGA-FLO® filters have demonstrated robust performance and reliability, the commodity nature of HVAC filters reduces a continuous downward pricing pressure from consumers. Thus, it would be desirable to fabricate a filter with similar performance at a reduced production cost in order to satisfy market demands.

Therefore, there is a need for an improved HVAC filter assembly.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Embodiments of the invention generally include a filter assembly having a media pack having a single web of pleated media having at least two mini-pleated regions arranged in non-linear orientation. In one embodiment, a filter assembly includes a media pack defined by a single web of media, and an adhesive layer coupling a flat end of the media pack to a frame assembly to form a lap joint.

In another embodiment, a filter assembly includes a media pack sealed to a frame assembly. A discontinuous layer of adhesive couples at least one edge of the media pack to the frame assembly. In one embodiment, the discontinuous layer comprises a swirled or sprayed layer of adhesive. In another embodiment, the discontinuous layer comprises a random, a wave or an oscillating pattern of adhesive. In yet another embodiment, the discontinuous layer includes adhesive regions touching and spaced from each other. In yet another embodiment, the discontinuous layer includes a plurality of elongated adhesive strings having regions touching and spaced from each other.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

A more particular description of the invention, briefly summarized above, may be had by reference to the embodiments

thereof that are illustrated in the appended drawings. It is to be noted, however, that the appended drawings illustrate only typical embodiments of this invention and, therefore, are not to be considered limiting of its scope, for the invention may admit to other equally effective embodiments.

FIGS. 1A-B are front isometric and exploded views of one embodiment of an air filter of the present invention, FIG. 1C is a top view of a mini-pleat region of a filter media according to one embodiment of an air filter of the present invention, and FIG. 1D is a top view of a v-bank section of a filter media according to one embodiment of an air filter of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is an isometric view of one embodiment of a vent separator;

FIG. 3 depicts one embodiment of a filter media suitable for use in the filter of FIGS. 1A-B;

FIG. 4 is a bottom isometric view of a top panel of the filter of FIGS. 1A-B;

FIGS. 5A-C are isometric, sectional and partial side views of one embodiment of a side panel;

FIG. 6 is a partial sectional view of the side panel of FIGS. 5A-C;

FIGS. 7A-B are partial sectional views of the media pack adhered to the top panel in alternative configurations;

FIGS. 8A-B are sectional and top views of another embodiment of the media pack adhered to the top panel;

FIGS. 9A-B are sectional and top views of another embodiment of the media pack adhered to the top panel;

FIG. 10 is another embodiment of a media pack adhered to a top panel;

FIG. 11 is an exploded view of a conventionally-pleated media pack of a filter having a conventionally-pleated media pack sealed to a frame using a swirled adhesive;

FIG. 12 is another embodiment of a filter having a conventionally-pleated media pack sealed to a housing with a swirled adhesive;

FIG. 13 is another embodiment of the filter having a swirled adhesive utilized to seal a plurality of filter banks; and

FIG. 14 is a flow diagram of one embodiment of a method for fabricating an air filter.

To facilitate understanding, identical reference numerals have been used, where possible, to designate identical elements that are common to the figures. It is contemplated that elements disclosed in one embodiment may be beneficially utilized on other embodiments without specific recitation.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

FIGS. 1A-B are front isometric and exploded views of one embodiment of an air filter assembly **100** of the present invention. Although the filter assembly **100** illustrated in FIGS. 1A-B incorporate a plurality of beneficial features, it is contemplated that the invention may be beneficially incorporated in other filter assemblies having different configurations.

In one embodiment, the filter assembly **100** includes a frame assembly **102** and a media pack **104**. The media pack **104** is coupled to the frame assembly **102** such that substantially all of the air passing through the filter assembly **100** will pass through the media pack **104**.

The media pack **104** is fabricated from a continuous, uninterrupted sheet of filter media **106** having both backs of mini-pleated regions **108** arranged in a non linear orientation, for example, in one or more macropleats, or v-banks **110**, advantageously providing both economy of fabrication and high media area for efficient filtration. The use of a single media pack **104** in the filter assembly **100** fabricated from a single continuous, uninterrupted sheet of filter media **106** eliminates

the labor, materials and logistics associated with cutting, storing, assembling and sealing multiple media packs into a single filter element.

The filter media **106** in the minipleated regions **108** is generally folded in an accordion-like manner to form a plurality of minipleats **120**. The minipleats **120** may have a pleat height **112** of about 1 to about 3 inches, and a minipleat density of about 0.75 to about 1.5 pleats per inch (as shown in FIG. 1C). The minipleat pleats **120** may optionally have minipleat separators (not shown) disposed on one or more sides of the pleats **120**. The minipleat separators may be thread, ribbon or hot melt, as known in the art.

Adjacent minipleated regions **108** are also folded in an accordion-like manner to define each v-bank **110**. The v-banks **110** may have a pleat height **116** of about 5.0 to about 15.0 inches. The v-banks **110** may have a density of about 0.16 to about 0.33 v-banks per inch (as shown in FIG. 1D). The edges of the minipleated region **108** and v-banks **110** having the accordion like folds that are generally referred to as open edges **142**, while the opposing short ends of the media pack **104** are generally referred to as the flat edge **144**. It is contemplated that other v-bank configurations may be utilized. In the embodiment depicted in FIGS. 1A-1B, the media pack **104** has two v-banks **110**. Other common configurations include one or two v-banks **110**, although other configurations are contemplated.

A bank separator **122** may be disposed between the minipleat regions **108** forming the v-banks **110**. The bank separators **122** may be disposed on the upstream and/or downstream side of the filter assembly **100**. In the embodiment depicted in FIGS. 1A-B, two bank separators **122** are shown on the downstream side of the filter assembly **100** with no bank separators utilized on the upstream side.

The bank separator **122** generally includes a channel **124** and a finger form **126**. The channel **124** couples the finger form **126** to the frame assembly **102**. The finger form **126** generally includes a plurality of center fingers **128** and edge fingers **130**. The center fingers **128** extend from the channel **124** between facing sides of adjacent minipleated regions **108**. The edge fingers **130** are shorter than the center fingers **128** and extend from the channel **124** between the frame assembly **102** and the adjacent minipleated region **108**.

FIG. 2 depicts an exploded isometric view of one embodiment of the bank separator **122**. The channel **124** has a c-sectional form and may be fabricated from metal, glass reinforced plastic (FRP) or other suitable material. A hole **202** is provided in each end **204** of the channel **124** to facilitate coupling the channel **124** to the frame assembly **102**, for example, by a fastener, such as a rivet or screw.

The finger form **126** is generally fabricated from metal, cardboard, wood, chipboard, paperboard, FRP, plastic or other suitable material. A base **206** of the finger form **126** is sized to slide into and be retained by the channel **126**. The center and edge fingers **128**, **130** may be fabricated with the base **206** as a one-piece assembly, for example, by stamping from a single blank stock of material.

In one embodiment, the finger form **126** has a length substantially equal to that of the channel **126**. Upon assembly, edges **208** of the finger form **126** align with the ends **204** of the channel **124**, thereby orientating the fingers **128**, **130** along the channel **126** in a predetermined position. Although the edge **208** is shown on the base **206**, the edge **208** may additionally or alternatively be defined by the outside of the edge fingers **130**.

A notch **210** is formed in at least one of the edge fingers **130** or base **206** on the side of the finger form **126** facing away from the fingers **128**, **130**. The notch **210** is aligned with the

hole **202** formed in the channel **124**. The notch **210** provides clearance for the fastener passing through the hole **202** utilized to secure the channel **126** of bank separator **122** to the frame assembly **102** without disturbing the positioning of the finger form **126** relative to the channel **124**.

FIG. 3 depicts one embodiment of the filter media **106** suitable for using in the media pack **104**. The filter media **106** generally has a stiffness suitable to substantially maintain the pleat configuration when subjected to air flow rates of at least about 88 feet per minute. Flow rates through the filter assembly **100** may range between, but are not limited to, about 750 to about 3000 cubic feet per minute. In one embodiment, the filter media **106** has a filtering layer **302** and a backing layer **304**. The filtering layer **302** may be fabricated from glass fiber, wet laid glass fiber, synthetic media, or organic material, such a cellulose or cotton, among others. The filtering layer **302** is generally selected to provide a predetermined filtering efficiency and pressure drop. The filtering layer **302** typically has, but is not limited to, an efficiency of up to about 95 percent DOP. In another embodiment, a filtering efficiency may be selected in the range of about 9 to about 14 MERV, such as about 10 to about 13 MERV. It is contemplated that media providing either higher or lower filtering efficiencies may be utilized.

The backing layer **304** provides support to the filtering layer **302** and is typically located on the downstream side of the filtering layer **302**. The backing layer **304** may be a mesh, mat, perforated, expanded or other material suitable for supporting the filtering layer **302** without detrimentally increasing the pressure drop across the media **106**. The backing layer **304** may be fabricated from a metal, polymeric or other suitable material. In the embodiment depicted in FIG. 3, the backing layer **304** is a wire mesh **306**. In yet another embodiment, the wire mesh **306** is fabricated from copper clad wire arranged in a square grid having one inch welded centers. Although the backing layer **304** may be bent sharply at the apex of the minipleats, a minipleat fold radius between pleats **120** in the minipleat region **108** is generally maintained at a radius of at least about 0.090 inches to ensure the filtering layer **302** is not sharply bent in a manner that could potentially leakage and/or lead to shedding of the filtering media.

In one embodiment, a width of the filtering layer **302** is generally greater than the width of the backing layer **304**. As such, a lateral edge **310** of the filtering layer **302** extends beyond a lateral edge (shown as dashed line **312**) of the backing layer **304** to define an unsupported edge region **350** of the filtering layer **304**. This allows the unsupported edge region **350**, located along the open edge **142** of the filtering layer **302** after pleating, to be folded or otherwise deformed upon assembly with the frame assembly **102** (as further discussed below). Respective terminal ends **314**, **316** of the filtering and backing layers **302**, **304** are generally aligned and are located along the first edge **144** after pleating.

Referring primarily to FIGS. 1A-B, the frame assembly **102** generally has a quadrilateral form, such as square or rectangular. In one embodiment, the frame assembly **102** includes top and bottom panels **132**, **134** coupled to side panels **136**. The panels **132**, **134**, **136** may be fabricated from metal, coated steel, galvanized steel, plastic, wood or wood product such as fiber board, cardboard, chip board and the like, FRP or other suitable material. The panels **132**, **134**, **136** may be coupled by any suitable method, for example, by clips, screws, rivets, welding, snap-fit, adhesive and tape, among others. In the embodiment depicted in FIGS. 1A-B, a plurality of rivets **138** are utilized to couple the panels **132**, **134**, **136**. A plurality of braces **140** may optionally be coupled between the panels **132**, **134**, **136** to rigidize the frame assem-

5

bly 102. Although FIGS. 1A-B depict the panels 132, 134, 136 as separately fabricated components, it is contemplated that two or more, or even all of the panels 132, 134, 136, may be fabricated from a single blank of base material or be a molded assembly.

FIG. 4 depicts an isometric view of one embodiment of the top panel 132. The bottom panel 134 may be similarly constructed. The top panel 132 generally includes a wall 402 having a plurality of flanges 404 extending therefrom. The flanges 404 include a plurality of panel mounting holes 406 for accepting the rivet 138 utilized to secure the top panel 132 to the side panels 136. Each of the flanges 404 may optionally include appropriate brace mounting holes 408 to facilitate coupling braces 140 between the panels 132, 136. In one embodiment, the top panel 132 is fabricated from sheet metal.

FIGS. 5A-C are isometric, sectional and partial side views of one embodiment of the side panel 136. The side panel 136 generally includes a wall 502 having opposing end flanges 504, a downstream flange 506 and an upstream flange 508 extending therefrom. The wall 502 includes a plurality of panel mounting holes 518 for accepting the rivet 138 utilized to secure the side panels 136 to the top and bottom panels 132, 134. Each of the flanges 506, 508 may optionally include appropriate brace mounting holes 556 for facilitating coupling braces 140 between the panels 132, 134, 136. The flanges 506, 508 may optionally include additional holes 558 for securing the filter assembly 100 to a holding flange, second filter or other object. In one embodiment, the top panel 132 is fabricated from sheet metal.

An anchor tab 510 is provided adjacent the upstream flange 508. The anchor tab 510 provides a surface for attaching the flat edge 144 of the media pack 104 to the frame assembly 102. The anchor tab 510 extends inward relative to the wall 502 and away from the upstream flange 508. The anchor tab 510 is spaced from the upstream flange 508 a distance of about 0.25 to about 10 inches, thereby spacing the media pack 104 from the wall 502. The spacing of the media pack 104 from the wall 504 enhances air flow and reduces pressure drop by providing adequate open area between the media pack 104 and wall 502 proximate the upstream flange 508 so that the proximity of the pack 104 to the wall 502 does not restrict the flow of air in that area.

The anchor tab 510 may be orientated between zero to about 90 degrees relative to the upstream flange 508. In one embodiment, the anchor tab 510 is orientated between 30 to about 60 degrees relative to the upstream flange 508. From another reference point, the orientation of the anchor tab 510 is between about parallel to about perpendicular relative to the wall 502. In one embodiment, the anchor tab 510 is orientated between 30 to about 60 degrees relative to the wall 502. In the embodiment, the anchor tab 510 extends further away from the wall 502 than the upstream flange 508. In the embodiment depicted in FIGS. 5A-C, the anchor tab 510 extends at least about 1.0 inch from the wall 502, although shorter lengths may alternatively be used.

FIG. 6 is a sectional view of the side panel 136 illustrating the attachment of the media pack 104 to the anchor tab 510. The flat edge 144 of the media pack 104 is coupled to the anchor tab 510 by an adhesive 602. The adhesive 602 may be a pressure sensitive adhesive, a double sided tape, a silicone adhesive, a polyurethane adhesive or other suitable adhesive. In the embodiment depicted in FIG. 6, the adhesive 602 is a hot melt. The adhesive 602 may be disposed along the anchor tab 510 in a substantially uninterrupted bead, covering the entire length, or intermittently.

Alternatively, the flat edge 144 of the media pack 104 may be potted or adhered in a trough 604 defined between the

6

anchor tab 510 and the upstream flange 508. In yet another alternative embodiment, the flat edge 144 of the media pack 104 may be clamped between the anchor tab 510 and the wall 502, or secured to the side panel 136 using a spring clip.

Referring back to FIGS. 5A-5C, the length of the anchor tab 510 is generally less than a length of the upstream flange 508. As illustrated in FIG. 5B, an end 512 of the anchor tab 510 is offset inward from an end 514 of the upstream flange 508 relative to the end flanges 504. The recessed ends 512 of the anchor tab 510 is thus maintained spaced-apart from the walls 402 of the top and bottom panels 132, 134, thereby providing clearance for the open end 142 of the media pack 104 to sealingly engage the top and bottom panels 132, 134 as described with reference to FIG. 7A.

The anchor tab 510 may be part of, or coupled to the side panel 136. In one embodiment, the anchor tab 510 is fabricated from the portion of the side panel 136 forming the upstream flange 508. For example, in the embodiment depicted in FIG. 5C, the upstream flange 508 includes an outer wall 550 and an inner wall 552. The outer wall 550 is coupled along a first side to the wall 502. The second side of the outer wall 550 terminates at a fold, which beings the inner wall 552. The inner wall 552 extends back towards the wall 502 to a bend 554. The anchor tab 510 extends back away from the inner wall 552 and wall 502 as discussed above.

The holes 556, 558 formed through the upstream flange 508 include a first hole 562 formed through the outer wall 550 and a second hole 564 formed through the inner wall 564. The second hole 564 is typically larger in diameter than the first hole 562 to ensure alignment between the holes 562, 564 forming the hole 556 for the rivet or other fastener securing the braces 140 and/or bank separators 122. The angle of the anchor tab 510 (and/or spacing of the anchor tab 510 provided by the bend 554/trough 602) allows the insertion of a fastener through the holes 552, 558 without obstruction.

FIG. 7A is a partial sectional view of the media pack 104 adhered to the top panel 132. The media pack 104 is adhered to the bottom panel 134 in a similar manner. The open end 142 of the media pack 104 is sealed to the top panel 132 using an adhesive 702. As with the sealing of the flat end 144 of the media pack 104 to the side panel 136, the method of how the adhesive is utilized will depend on the amount of bypass leakage permissible under the specification under which the filter assembly 100 is built and/or tested.

In one embodiment, the adhesive 702 substantially covers the inner surface of the wall 402. The adhesive 702 may be a polymer-based adhesive, a water soluble paste, a hot melt adhesive, or other suitable adhesive. In the embodiment depicted in FIG. 7A, the adhesive 702 is a pressure sensitive hot melt adhesive, such as Semi-crystalline adhesives, polyolefin-based adhesives, polyimide-based adhesives, modified EVA adhesives and (APAO) amorphous polyolefins. Other suitable adhesives include (SIS) styrene isoprene styrene, rubber-based adhesives and acrylic-based adhesives, among others. Other suitable adhesives may be water-based pastes, including thixotropic, paste and liquid adhesive systems. Additional adhesives may be mastics, caulks and the like, including latex, silicone, polyurethane, pitel and tar, among others. The adhesive may alternatively be a two component or reacted thermoset material, such as epoxy, polyurethane, or a heat-cured material, such as plastisols. The adhesive may also be a solvent or water-based contact cement, rubber cement and the like. As the top panel 132 is secured to the side panel 136, the wall 502 is urged against the unsupported edge region 350 of the media pack 104, creating a fold 704. The fold 704 substantially prevents air flowing through the filter

assembly **100** from leaking between the media pack **104** and side panel **136** through the open end **144**.

In one embodiment, the adhesive **702** is a pressure sensitive repositionable adhesive containing an oily component resulting in a tacky material with a relatively long open time (approximately one minute) and an aggressive bond that allows the open end **144** to be adjusted (i.e., repositioned) relative to the wall **402**. Repositionable adhesives generally have an open time (e.g., time in which good bonding will occur) of at least about 10 seconds. The open time may exceed about 1 minute, or be indefinite.

The use of a repositionable adhesive is beneficial in that the orientation between opposing minipleated regions **108** forming the v-banks **140** may be set with greater position. It has been demonstrated that a symmetric and uniform orientation of the v-banks **140** enhances airflow uniformity through the filter assembly, and thus, minimizes the pressure drop across the filter assembly during operation. For example, the filter assembly **100** with uniform bank spacing has a resistance of about 0.49 inches water gage (in. wg.) as compared to a resistance of about 0.58 in. wg. for a similar filter fabricated with non-repositional adhesives which resulted in non-uniform bank spacing.

In another embodiment, the adhesive **702** has a high tack that is sufficient to anchor the media pack **104** to the side panels **136** over the course of normal operations. The adhesive **702** may have a moderate to aggressive tack, and may bond substantially instantaneously to the media pack **104**. Suitable adhesives may be of the type that exhibit excellent adhesion to a wide variety of materials, including the media pack **104** and the frame material.

FIG. 7B is another partial sectional view of the media pack **104** adhered to the top panel **132**. Here, the open end **142** of the media pack **104** is also sealed to the top panel **132** using an adhesive **712** having a sufficient depth to allow the open end **142** to penetrate the adhesive **712**. Thus, in this embodiment, the seal between the media **106** and the adhesive **712** provides the primary barrier to air leakage.

FIG. 8A-B are sectional and top views of another embodiment of the media pack **104** adhered to the top panel **132**. An adhesive **812** is disposed on the wall **402** in a discontinuous configuration, for example, by utilizing a spray or swirl pattern such that the adhesive **812** does not continuously cover the wall **402**. The swirl pattern may be described as one or more elongated adhesive beads or strings. The swirl pattern may have a random, wave, oscillating, a swirl or other pattern across the wall **402**. The swirl pattern may also have adhesive regions touching and spaced from each other. In one embodiment, the adhesive **812** is a hot melt suitable for use with a swirl gun, such as hot melt adhesives described above with reference to adhesive **712**. The adhesive **812** applied to the wall **402** in a swirl pattern using a hot melt swirl spray gun, available from Nordson Corporation, located in Westlake, Ohio. As the swirled adhesive **812** does not completely cover the wall **402**, less than about 50 grams/square foot of adhesive may be utilized to effectively secure the media pack **104** to the wall **402**, as compared to about 70 grams/square foot in conventional applications. In another embodiment, less than about 20 grams/square foot of adhesive may be utilized to effectively secure the media pack **104**. It is contemplated that the grams/square foot of adhesive utilized may be further reduced by foaming the adhesive. It is further contemplated that other adhesive systems, such as two component or reacted systems, epoxies, polyurethanes, thixotropic, caulk or other adhesive may be utilized in a swirl or other pattern that minimizes adhesive use while suitably bonding the media pack to the wall **402**.

FIGS. 9A-B are sectional and top views of another embodiment of the media pack **104** adhered to the top panel **132**. The adhesive **812** is disposed in an accordion-like or zig-zag manner such that a pattern **902** of adhesive disposed on the wall **402** is substantially aligned with the v-banks **110** of the media pack **104**. It is contemplated that continuous layer (i.e., not swirled) of a non-flowing adhesive may be utilized.

In one embodiment, the adhesive **802** may be applied using a mask **1002**, as shown in FIG. 10. The mask **1002** may be used as a guide or pattern to direct the motion of the spray gun. Alternatively, the mask **1002** may be used as a stencil. The mask **1002** may be a polymeric material, such as polyethylene, which does not adhere to the adhesive **802**. Thus, the adhesive overspray **1004** disposed on the mask **1002** may be periodically peeled off, re-melted and re-sprayed onto the wall **402**.

It is noted that utilizing the spray adhesive and/or masking the adhesive may be utilized to advantageously minimize the amount of adhesive in other filter applications. The spray adhesive may additionally be applied robotically to ensure uniform adhesive coverage. For example, swirl adhesive **1102** may be applied to a frame **1104** to seal a conventionally pleated media pack **1106** in the fabrication of a panel filter **1100**, as shown in FIG. 11. In another embodiment, swirl adhesive **1202** may be applied to a flat portion **1208** of a frame **1204** to form a strip **1206** that is narrower than the width of the flat portion **1208**. The width of the strip **1206** is selected to adequately seal a conventionally pleated media pack **1210** in the fabrication of a panel filter **1200**, as shown in FIG. 12. The strip **1206** may be applied using a mask, as discussed above. In another embodiment, a strip **1302** of adhesive **1304** may be applied on a frame **1308** in a zig-zag pattern to seal a plurality of filter banks **1306** arranged in a v-bank configuration **1310** in the fabrication of a v-bank filter **1300**, as shown in FIG. 13.

FIG. 14 is one embodiment of a method **1400** for making filter assembly. The method **1400** begins at step **1402** by securing the flat ends of a continuous pleated media pack to a side panel of a filter frame assembly. In one embodiment, the flat ends may be secured to an anchor tab extending from the panel using a lap joint using a hot melt or other suitable adhesive.

At step **1404**, a filter securing adhesive is applied to the top and bottom panels of the filter frame assembly. In one embodiment, the adhesive may be disposed across the entire area of the top and bottom panels. In another embodiment, the adhesive may be arranged on the top and bottom panels in an accordion configuration. In yet another embodiment, the adhesive is applied in an interrupted strip. In yet another embodiment, the adhesive is applied using a swirl gun to produce a swirled adhesive pattern. In still another embodiment, the adhesive is foamed. It is contemplated that the adhesive may be applied using any combination of the above configurations.

At step **1406**, the open-end of the pleated media pack is brought into contact with the adhesive disposed in top and bottom panels of the filter frame assembly. In one embodiment, the pleated media pack is arranged in an accordion configuration to define one or more v-banks prior to adhering to the top and bottom panels of the frame assembly. In another embodiment, the entire length of the pleated media pack is maintained in a linear relationship while adhered to the top and bottom panels.

At step **1408**, the separators are installed. Braces are secured between the side and top/bottom panels at step **1410** to rigidize the filter assembly.

Thus, a filter assembly has been provided that facilitates rapid assembly with minimal labor. Moreover, embodiment

of the filter assembly described herein may be fabricated with less materials than conventional designs. Furthermore, the filter assembly of the present invention has demonstrated performance comparable to conventional designs, thus making the invention well positioned to address the needs of next generation filtration products.

Although various embodiments which incorporate the teachings of the present invention have been shown and described in detail herein, those skilled in the art can readily devise many other varied embodiments that still incorporate these teachings.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for fabricating a filter assembly, comprising: securing flat ends of a pleated media pack respectively to a first panel and a second panel of a frame assembly via a lap joint, wherein the lap joint is formed by contacting one of the flat ends with an adhesive to a tab respectively extending from the first panel and second panel of the frame assembly such that the adhesive is positioned between the one of the flat ends of the media pack and the tab, wherein each panel frame assembly comprises a side wall defining an outside wall of the frame assembly, an outer wall extending inward from the side wall and defining an upstream flange, and an inner wall connected to the outer wall by a fold, wherein the tab extends inward from the inner wall relative to the side wall and away from the upstream flange, the tab terminating inward of the fold formed in the tab relative to the side wall, the media pack having at least two mini-pleated regions arranged in v-bank orientation; and securing open ends of the pleated media pack respectively to a top and a bottom of the frame assembly.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the adhesive further comprises:
 - at least one of a pressure sensitive adhesive, a double sided tape, a silicone adhesive or a polyurethane adhesive.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the adhesive further comprises a hot melt.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the adhesive is applied as an interrupted strip.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein securing the open ends of the pleated media pack further comprises:
 - applying a hot melt to bottom panel of the frame assembly.
6. The method of claim 5, wherein applying the hot melt further comprises:
 - applying a discontinuous layer of adhesive to the bottom panel.
7. The method of claim 5, wherein applying the hot melt further comprises:
 - applying less than about 50 grams/square foot of adhesive to the bottom panel.
8. The method of claim 5, wherein applying the hot melt further comprises:
 - at least partially foaming the hot melt.
9. The method of claim 1, wherein securing the open ends of the pleated media pack further comprises:
 - forming at least one v-shaped pattern of adhesive on the bottom panel of the frame assembly.
10. The method of claim 1, wherein securing the open ends of the pleated media pack further comprises:
 - masking the bottom panel.
11. The method of claim 10, wherein masking the bottom panel further comprises:
 - placing a mask on the bottom panel;
 - applying an adhesive to the bottom panel through openings in the mask.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein masking the bottom panel further comprises:

applying an adhesive to the bottom panel through openings in a mask positioned over the bottom panel.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein securing the open ends of the pleated media pack further comprises:

contacting the open ends to a plurality of elongated adhesive strings having regions touching and spaced from each other.

14. A method for fabricating a filter assembly, comprising: securing flat ends of a pleated media pack respectively to a first panel and a second panel of a frame assembly, wherein each panel frame assembly comprises a side wall defining an outside wall of the frame assembly, an outer wall extending inward from the side wall and defining an upstream flange, and an inner wall connected to the outer wall by a fold, wherein a tab extends inward from the inner wall relative to the side wall and away from the upstream flange, the tab terminating inward of the fold formed in the tab relative to the side wall, the media pack having at least two mini-pleated regions arranged in v-bank orientation;

applying an adhesive in a swirled pattern to a top and a bottom of the frame assembly; and

contacting open ends of the pleated media pack with the swirled adhesive.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the swirled adhesive further comprises a pressure sensitive hot melt adhesive, a semi-crystalline adhesive, a polyolefin-based adhesive, a polyimide-based adhesive, a modified EVA adhesive, (APAO) amorphous polyolefin, (SIS) styrene isoprene styrene, a rubber-based adhesives or an acrylic-based adhesives.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein the swirled adhesive further comprises:

a hot melt adhesive.

17. The method of claim 14, wherein the swirled adhesive further comprises:

an adhesive having an open time of at least 10 seconds.

18. The method of claim 14, wherein the swirled adhesive further comprises:

an adhesive having an open time of at least one minute.

19. The method of claim 14, wherein the swirled adhesive further comprises:

a pressure adhesive.

20. The method of claim 14, wherein applying the swirled adhesive further comprises:

forming an accordion pattern of adhesive on the frame assembly.

21. The method of claim 14, wherein the media pack further comprises:

at least one quadrilateral section of pleated media.

22. A method for fabricating a filter assembly, comprising: securing flat ends of a pleated media pack respectively to a first panel and a second panel of a frame assembly, wherein each panel frame assembly comprises a side wall defining an outside wall of the frame assembly, an outer wall extending inward from the side wall and defining an upstream flange, and an inner wall connected to the outer wall by a fold, wherein a tab extends inward from the inner wall relative to the side wall and away from the upstream flange, the tab terminating inward of the fold formed in the tab relative to the side wall, the media pack having at least two mini-pleated regions arranged in v-bank orientation;

forming a discontinuous adhesive layer having less than about 50 grams/square foot on a bottom of the frame assembly; and

11

contacting an open end of the pleated media pack with the discontinuous adhesive layer.

23. The method of claim **22**, wherein forming the adhesive layer further comprises:

applying at least one of a hot melt or pressure sensitive adhesive or an adhesive having an open time greater than about 1 minute to the frame assembly. 5

12

24. The method of claim **22**, wherein forming the adhesive layer further comprises:

applying a plurality of elongated adhesive strings having regions touching and spaced from each other to one side of the frame assembly.

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